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TRUTHS FOR TO-DAY

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TRUTHS FOR TO-DA

SECOND SERIES.

BY DAVID SWING,

PASTOR CENTRAL CHURCH.

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CHRIST.

SERMON I.

CHRIST.

"Canst thou by searching find out God?"—*Job* 11: 7.

LET us continue to-day the general reflections begun last Sunday over the name of Christ. I shall not ask you to mark more of His minor virtues, but some of the facts in His most wonderful history. Of all divine or presumably divine persons, we may remark, in the first place, that Christ comes nearest to being a fact. The history of religion is a history of incarnations of Deity. The pagan ages surpassed the Christian in the quantity of the divine-human. All the woods, and mountains, and rivers, and seas, were full of beings that were above man and full of the eternal essence. The terrible, and the beautiful, and the good, culminated in some form that could sit upon an Olympus, or could run through the woods with garments flowing about the feet, or that could drive a chariot over the wave. Of all

these stories so woven into the history of religion, the story of Christ is the one that comes nearest to perfect verification according to all the laws of human evidence. None of the great classic or Asiatic writers pretend to have seen the great superhuman ideas in whose name they worshiped. Venus, Juno, Jupiter, Prometheus, Osis, Osiris, were only long-continued dreams of the generations. They were like the toy-bringing god of our Christmas, only the incarnation of the world's wish and infant thought. Once the world was peopled by only a race of infants. As our children believe in the Christmas god, the ancients believed in the group upon Olympus gathered about an ambrosial feast.

It is evident that when the Creator formed man he placed within him a religious sentiment, a sense of a superior existence, and this being the nature of the subjective mind, the outer realm became at once peopled with supernatural creatures. As the fever-stricken dream of fountains of water, so the religious nature of man dreams of gods. In its ignorant age it sees deity in wood or stone, and sees hundreds or thousands of them. The modern Hindoo says he believes in three hundred millions of gods. This confession is valuable, for it shows the inner religious sentiment looking out of the mind; and while the

details, are false, there the sentiment stands in its power, and proclaims the presence of divinity in the universe. Paul says there is a law in the spirit that reveals the Infinite One, and that on this account all souls are responsible for the conduct of life. Now this inner sentiment, in its power, which has always surpassed its information, has peopled the air with divinities, crude, feeble, great, or monstrous, according to the surroundings of the brain. A faculty or an instinct does not include the right use of the faculty or instinct. The sentiment of music in the soul did not involve the immediate discovery of the piano or the arrangement at once of a symphony, but involved only a long struggle and a long period of littleness. The religious feeling in the soul thus struggled along, and in the first years of its strivings saw gods in every storm, and in every ray of sunshine, and in all the shadows of the night. Paul says God so made the rational world that they should "seek the Lord if haply they may feel after him and find him." All the mythological and theological phenomena of the past are manifestations of this feeling after the true God. Often have the best men given up the pursuit, and have become skeptics or have erected an altar to the unknown God. One of the sages said: "What God is, I know not; what

he is not, I know." One of the classic poets said: "O Jupiter, thy name is all I know." The great Bible rhapsodist, Job, says: "Who, by searching, can find out God?" Pliny uttered a similar feeling in the words, "What is God? If, in truth, he be any thing distinct from nature, it is beyond the compass of man's understanding to know." The utterances from leading intellects of antiquity show that there has always been going forward a great search after God, and that all the religious ideas of antiquity are the fruits of that search. The interminable list of deities, from Odin to Buddha, and Jove and Apollo, are the fruits of the profound study of the old world.

In the midst of these scenes, Christ stands the nearest of all alleged divinities to any historical fact. I do not forget that there have been claims to divine honors set up by others. Herod proclaimed himself a god. Others have set forth the same tempting report. But a few years have brought to nothingness these boasting ones all along the path of history. So utter has been the failure of the human aspirants after divine fame, and so hidden by mists of legend has been all the host of pagan deities, that we feel justified in saying that, of all embodiments of the divine, Christ stands

nearest the domain of fact. Above all other superhuman ones He stands farthest from myth, and nearest to reality. Mark, then, the superiority of Christ as a fact. The Christian poet can not say, with the classic, "All I know of thee is thy name," and they that erect an altar to him can not write over it, to "the unknown God." The reality of Jesus is as definite, as undeniable, as the reality of Washington or Franklin. All the other incarnations belong to the atmosphere of legend. No twelve disciples gathered daily around the feet of Olympian Jove, or of the beautiful Apollo, nor of the gifted Minerva. No multitude gathered upon the mountain-side to hear and see the Hercules and Aphrodite. If some crowd, acting in the historic period, in the days of language and words, had followed the Apollo along the streets of Jerusalem or Athens, and had even crucified him, then would the Christian Gospel confess a rival in the pagan pages. But it was the misfortune of all that Olympian group that there was no Judas to betray any one of them with a kiss, and no Pilate to order any one of them to the cross. They all lived outside the bounds of evidence, and hence to-day appear only like the pictures of the virtues or the graces, outward expressions of the inner soul. They were the

efforts of mankind to find the hidden One. In Christ, therefore, the idea of an incarnate God first touched history and passed over from legend to evidence. Even the Jews, the race most hostile to the claims of this Messiah, did not deny His existence, but in the early centuries said that He performed his wonders by possessing himself of the ineffable name stolen from the holy place of the temple. Many as are the opinions as to the nature of Christ, there is no denial anywhere, from the earliest Christian to the last, that Jesus Christ lived and did almost such as recorded in the Gospel.

Exhausting no more of your time and, perhaps, of your patience, too, upon a question which no one denies, let us reflect upon our second theme, namely, the quality of the fact. Here is the enigma of the religious world. Confessing the reality of Christ, the multitude of thinkers and toilers out of theology and in it, out of the Church and in it, wonder and wonder just what quality to attach to the Christ-idea. Here we can not come with any perfect peace for the intellect. Not only was there a great search before Christ, a search in which Plato, and Cato, and Cicero, and Epictetus, and Aurelius, and all the great ones engaged, feeling after God if haply they might find Him, but there is a search going

forward still, as absolute in our day as in the days of the doubting Socrates or praying Aurelius. Christ's advent into the domain of evidence has greatly modified this pursuit after the unknown God, and in the hearts of millions of human beings has put the deep inquiry to rest. For eighteen centuries thousands upon thousands have found in Him a peace that knows no storm. But nothing but death can solve, to all, all the enigmas of earth, and hence to-day the immense seeking for light goes on, and a large multitude asks, "What shall we believe about this Saviour?" I can not speak peace to this troubled sea, I only confess the presence of the storm, and feel that many noble souls are out in the ruffled water. Each one must calmly measure for himself the value of the Christ, and do this "with charity toward all and malice toward none."

Let me to-day ask you to think of the less questionable elements in this historic fact.

1. It was a great gain to our race that at last the search for an Incarnation came up to a real, visible being. Man had gone about as far as he could upon a theology of legend and absurdity. There was no valuable religious faith in the world at the time of the Advent. The great Roman Empire could confer upon its scattered states arts and lan-

guage and law and pleasure, but was unable to bestow any religion. One of the Roman writers said, "Even our children no longer believe in our divinities." One of the prayers of Pliny was "for a new consolation, great and strong, of which he had not yet heard or read." A Latin sage said, "I need a God who can speak to me and can lead me." Dr. Arnold finds somewhere in the writings of Aurelius "that he was sad and agitated, stretching out his arms for something beyond." Cicero had declared that the "Academy could prove nothing." The Roman Empire had all forms of greatness except religious faith. Weary of legend, cultured beyond the credulity that believes without evidence, the Roman Empire was ready for an advent of fact. In the Man of Nazareth the dim gates of mythology were closed and the gates of evidence were opened. Here was One that could speak to the multitude, and the hem of whose garment might be touched. Here was One who could say "blessed" to the unblessed crowd, and whose feet a Magdalene might bathe with tears. Here was One who could feed a multitude in the wilderness, who could comfort the dying and the living, and could allow a mortal like John to rest against His bosom. That wonderful chain of facts, stretching from the manger to the

tomb, was the first entrance of the divine upon the visible, and hence upon the real. The Psalmist had said, "Clouds and darkness are round about Him." What the modern spirit experiences as an occasional flow of melancholy was the constant feeling of all the noble ones of antiquity. Many of the most excellent sought death because it was supposed to be an end of sorrow; a sweet, dreamless sleep. What our poets dream of in lonely hours, most of the old sages carried about all the while in their hearts:

> Would this weary life was spent,
> Would this fruitless search were o'er,
> And rather than such visions, blessed
> The gloomiest depths of nothingness.

Such a poem shadows forth the occasional sadness of the present, but the almost universal darkness of classic Rome.

But as Christ was year by year unfolded in Palestine, both during His life and after His crucifixion, the world seemed to say, "What are all those images in the Pantheon compared with this new reality?"

Mankind will always exchange legend for history. The development of reason works against myth and in favor of the actual. Myths are welcome only to childish ages. If now the reason of many rise up

against Christ as being not sufficiently real, not absolutely proven, what must have been the revolt of reason against the chimeras of the classic religion, when such a manifest reality as Jesus was standing at the door of their temples, and even beating against their hearts? To a world that had been once satisfied with the Olympian gods, the presence of Christ was an overwhelming argument. That era had not been accustomed to proof, only to tradition, and hence Christ must have been to them a perfect surprise, a sudden solution of a mystery.

But let us examine further the quality of this Christ-idea. It was the first incarnation lying within the field of evidence, and hence, as I have stated, the Nazarene sets forth with peculiar value and charm. But how far was this Christ an incarnation of the divine? Here we approach the greatness of the fact. Let us avoid the complications that would arise over any study of the Trinity. The recent convention at Bonn, and indeed the whole history of the Christian theological debate, warns us against any effort to weigh fully the divine in Christ, or out of Him. The Methodist journal of this city declared last week, in speaking of Döllinger's "filioque," that attempts to understand the Trinity were utterly useless. Hence declining all debate over the doctrine

of the Three-in-One, let us, as free minds unincumbered by formulas, look at the divine quality of Christ. (1.) It should soften the judgment of us all in this matter, that we do not know the nature of Deity. If we knew the nature of Deity as we know the nature of earth, air, and water, we might become very decided over this question of the Incarnation, and might declare the heavenly element present or absent as a chemist takes an ore, and after an analysis declares the presence or absence of gold. It is not in human power thus to affirm and deny, over the great crucible of nature in which lies a soul. It is a little illogical, to state it in its mildest form, for any one to approach the historic Christ and declare the utter absence of Deity, for such a decision reposes upon the assumption that man knows what divinity is, as he knows the material elements. As in the theological kingdom, men are deemed arrogant who presume to know all about God and who will talk incessantly about Three-in-One, so not wholly free from assumption are those who will hasten to declare Christ to be wholly separated from any element above the loftiest human life. For mark the difficulty of the situation. No one knows what God is. Hence, no one may hasten to affirm His absence or presence. Mark the distin-

guished pantheists who, with their deep culture and with a logic difficult to meet, have declared all the universe to be God. Nature says to them:

"I wander up and down; I wander to and fro, and in all the roaring loom of time I weave the living garments of the Deity."

Another poet says to the soul:

> Dost thou not see
> Thy limitless expanse of destiny;
> Because within thy soul
> There dwells the vision of the whole.

The fourteenth proposition of Spinoza reads thus: "There is no substance but God, nor can any other be conceived." Thus the human intellect in its highest estate has been unable to draw a definite line around man, and thus shut out the supreme soul. It does not follow from this that the doctrine of pantheism is as credible as the doctrine of an Incarnate Messiah; but it does follow that none of us are in an intellectual condition that will justify us in treating with any contempt the idea that God is in Christ, reconciling the world to himself. We are such strangers to the quality of the Infinite One that we dare not declare him absent from the Man of Nazareth. One thing is certain, that if the Creator of the world ever has come or shall come within the

reach of the human senses, it must have been or must be by coming within the confines of our world. If, then, the whole human family has been grieving over an absent God, an invisible, inaccessible, formless, voiceless God, and has prayed that he would break through the impenetrable clouds and come near His children, it is a capricious logic that will then reject a Christ because the Deity can not enter a limited world. A strange world, that will pray for a manifest God and then reject the idea of a manifestation! Such are the difficulties that attend a peremptory rejection of the doctrine of the Incarnation, difficulties that may well open the heart to what evidence there may be upon the great New Testament shore. I am not ready to confess that God never would become limited by a body for the welfare of His children, nor ready to confess that He ever could become thus limited in a manner better, more impressive than in the person of Christ.

In order to exclude God from Bethlehem I must first know what God is.

There is every reason for supposing that man was created in the intellectual likeness of God, and hence for God to become manifest in Christ was only a filling to the full of a cup partly filled in the creation of man. Man himself held a part of the divine image.

Christ held it all. The words which Christ spoke were divine words. The human mind can not dream of any thing more divine. His love was the nearest infinite of any thing we can conceive; His whole career was just such a career as the divine would need to live if it should condescend to pass a few years upon earth. In fact, the picture of Jesus Christ is the best picture conceivable of a mingling of the earthly and the heavenly. The whole scene is above life and below the infinite. It was God brought down and man lifted up.

Eighteen hundred years have passed—years of marvelous experimentation and of intellectual progress. We who assemble here to-day will hear no voice from the sky telling us that Christ is above the human. No witnesses will come down from the heavens to tell us that the Jesus who was crucified is sitting at the right hand of God greeting with love His children as they pass up from earth through death's iron gate. We must walk along in the light we possess here—the light of common evidence, an evidence woven out of history, experience, testimony, and out of the humility that confesses that God may, for aught we know, tabernacle in the flesh. There have been great minds that have felt the Infinite One to be present in the winds and in the

flowers. They have seen Him in the sun and in the outspread universe. There may be a grand and powerful logic that sees Him in a Jesus Christ. Do not fear that you will believe too much miracle. When man believes in himself, he has broken the spell of reason, for there is no reason that can explain the evidence or nature of man. The Incarnate God is little more wonderful than the incarnate man. It is not of avail to reject the miracle of a Christ and leave the miracle of the universe untouched. I have said that minds, the most careful, the most logical, the most free, may cheerfully accept the Christ-idea. May! They have so done with perfect joy. Permit me to quote from some who knew no yoke of prejudice, and feared no condemnation of council or synod or pope. The testimony of those who are born into a system, and whose lives are those of servile obedience rather than of manly thought, would be worthless in your presence. Hence, let me repeat the words of a Carlyle: "He walked in Judea 1,800 years ago; His sphere melody, flowing in wild, native tones, took captive the ravished souls of men, and, being of a truth sphere melody, still flows and sounds, though now with thousand-fold accompaniments and rich symphonies, through all our hearts, and modulates and divinely leads them."

Franklin, in a letter to President Stiles, of Yale College, says: "I think Christ's morals and religion the best the world ever saw, or is likely to see, and while, with most of the dissenters in England, I have some doubts about His divinity, it is a question about which I never dogmatize, having never studied it. I shall know about it soon." This Franklin died a month afterward, thus showing us what a longing and tenderness were in that word "soon."

Charles Dickens, in his will, said: "I commit my soul to the mercy of God, through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and exhort my children humbly to try to guide themselves by the teachings of the New Testament."

William Ellery Channing says: "Jesus not only was, He is still, the Son of God, the Saviour of the world. He has entered that Heaven to which He always looked forward on earth. There He lives and reigns. With a calm, clear faith I see Him in that state of glory, and I confidently expect, at no distant period, to see Him face to face."

Such are some of the conclusions reached by intellects the most gifted and the most free. In a world where the mind is limited, and can not find more than half an answer to the question, What is man? or, What is nature? it must not wait a full

answer to the question, What is Christ? We must love the grand half-visions of this world. Like Moses, being unable to see the face of the Almighty, we must be content with the rustle of his flowing garments. Unable fully to measure the Christ, let us say, "Here is the only incarnation within the realm of evidence, and here the quality of the being is such that reason may forgive us and faith commend us if we say, Truly this was the Son of God."

If God were destined ever to draw near the human sense, the best shape of that earthly residence would be such as our Christ. What more impressive Son of God need we await than He of the manger and cross? Do we seek diviner words, or a diviner love or holier life? Let the superhuman come to us again and again, to attach itself to these years of humility and sorrow, and the being that should carry about this mingled soul and mind would always be a Jesus Christ. Heaven and earth meeting could not but give us the Man of Sorrows and sympathy. The upper purity and the lower sin, meeting, could not but give us the cross. Such upper life wedding the shores of death could not but give us the resurrection.

THE SURROUNDINGS OF CHRIST.

SERMON II.

THE SURROUNDINGS OF CHRIST.

"And when they saw the star they rejoiced with exceeding great joy."—*Matthew* 2 : 10.

LET us resume to-day our reflections over Him called the Christ. Let us recall some of the political, and moral, and religious, and literary scenes that lay outspread before the new King.

The first fact I mention is both political and literary. When Jesus entered upon His ministry there was a fact very favorable to the introduction of any new form of truth. The great prerequisite in the matter of thought and the dissemination of thought is the existence of a powerful language. It is the instrument by which great souls can break forth from their own imprisonment and visit the souls of mankind. Language is the chariot in which the soul visits its friends. Many a great mind has lived and died in chains because its ancestors had not wrought out for it, and, dying, willed to it, a wide-

reaching tongue that could at once stimulate the brain and stand ready to catch and express its life. Words are the embalmed ideas of the long yesterday. Each separate word is a truth. When, therefore, a genius like old Job is born into the world, and finds about him only the narrow Hebrew tongue, he enters upon a long imprisonment, unconscious, indeed, but real. He can utter some sublime things, but his mind is limited, like the soul of the Swiss child born only among mountains. When a genius like Göthe or Webster is born into such a universe of words as is seen in the German or English, it is the soul's own fault or sin if it does not move out freely and grandly toward the waiting human race. It is said of Dante that he was compelled to make the Italian language while he made his song; that he was compelled to ransack all the domain of Italian thought in order to find words and inflections which he might dare use and that could be woven into poetic melody. It is beautifully said that before he could sing his music he was compelled first to make a harp. What a wonderful inheritance, then, must belong to each young mind in this country, who at birth falls heir to one of the three great tongues, French, English, or German, capable of expressing all the happy and sad feelings, the great and useful

thoughts of a human life. The study of the English language alone, the mastery of all its words, would be a grand education in itself, for each word stands for a fact in the discoveries, or pursuits, or deeds, or feelings of society.

Through all of the thousand years before the opening of our era, the most intellectual race that has perhaps ever lived had built up the Greek language. As the coral rocks arose in the Southern ocean from great depths up to the sunlight, so the Greek language, from depths unknown, unsounded, arose until it came to the great upper sunlight of the poets and orators. Of all the marvels of history the Greek nation is the most wonderful. The seven wonders of the world are insignificant compared with that nation that occupied the little peninsula. Something great was poured into the Greek soul when it came from its Creator. It did nothing upon any humble scale. Its first song by Homer will equal all the songs that will follow it. A nation so many-sided, and so wonderful upon each side, came never before nor elsewhere: wonderful in politics, in philosophy, in poetry, in art, in heroism, and in physical beauty and development. All this greatness was treasured up in language, the image, as one of the Greeks said, of the soul.

Now the Roman Empire came in by its arms and ambition, and gave this language to all the Mediterranean world. Along with its companion, the Latin—a companion who was only a pleasant comrade rather than an equal or a rival—this Athenian tongue that opened the stores of poetry, and law, and philosophy to mankind, was given at once to all the civilized states of that period. The City of Rome itself enjoyed a population of 700,000, and the Roman Empire was administering its government to one hundred millions of people. Rome was equivalent to three republics like our own America. Over such a nation, so great, peace had been falling like a gracious sunshine for almost a half century. But that era of peace had been one of vice and all sensualism, and hence had developed a new human want, the want of a pure and adequate religion. The political state of things may be summed up in a few words: A large empire, a comparatively just government, a wonderful liberty of thought, and profound peace.

It is not my purpose to seek to-day only the favorable facts and make out by force the readiness of the world for Christ. It is my wish to recall, simply, facts, leaving to you to weigh the bearing and quality of the facts.

Having alluded to the political surroundings of

Jesus, let us pass to the literary condition of that classic empire. This theme has already been touched upon as to the presence and greatness of language. There remain other sides of this literary spectacle to be viewed. Christ came just after the literary glory of the old world had passed away. Language can not die suddenly, but great voices speaking in a golden tongue may very soon become silent. The Italian tongue remains, but there is no Dante, no Tasso, no Angelo, to speak in its accents. So when Christ appeared, the sun of Roman and of Greek literature had just set. Were we going to make an argument after the common fashion to show that the Advent came just when the world was most ready for it, we should pass by in silence the fact that the great Roman race had for a half hundred years been declining when the star arose in the East. According to human ideas the Advent came a generation too late. But when it comes to measuring the times and plans of God, man may well hasten to confess God to be utterly measureless, His ways above our ways, His thoughts above our thoughts. Dismissing the idea of justifying or condemning Providence, I re-state the fact that our Lord saw fit to throw the light of His advent down upon a world which was rapidly retreating into the shadows

of a long light. The "golden age" of Augustus ended before the Son of Man appeared. Streaks of the sunset were still upon the sky, but the great day of literature had passed, and night was coming rapidly over the most impressive country and nation which the world ever saw. Only for a moment recall those names so familiar to us all, and as loved as familiar. Julius Cæsar, the writer and the orator, had been slain forty-four years before our era began. Cicero was murdered a few years after the great Cæsar fell. Virgil died nineteen years before Christ came. Horace was in his grave forty years before Christ began to teach mankind. Sallust had been dead thirty-four years before the Child was born in the manger. Christ was only eighteen years old, was still an unknown carpenter, when Livy died. Publius Syrius, Catullus, Terence, all, all these gifted children of philosophy and song had gone to sleep long before the music of Bethlehem came to the ear of the shepherds. Except Tacitus and Pliny, no great name ever crossed over the line that divided the pagan and Christian periods. Not a single great orator or artist, poet or statesman, was remaining upon the Roman or Greek world when our Lord appeared. It is not within the scope of human reason or analysis to affirm whether this

condition of literature was favorable or averse to the triumph of Christ. The plan of the universe is so large, and its outcome and the forces that toil at the outcome are so hidden that man can dogmatize about it only in moments of arrogance. In moments of soberness he must bow in silence and wait for the slow logic of events. If it were lawful for us to indulge in inquiry or conjecture, we should, perhaps, express the feeling that Christianity desired the field to be vacated by the poets and orators and statesmen of the long antiquity, that the human mind might be led along the new path of morals and all spirituality. Who knows but that Cicero, and Virgil, and Livy, and all that long line of great ones were suffered to pass away that the St. Pauls and St. Johns might appear, bringing the seeds of a new civilization in their hands? Permitting each one to interpret the facts, let us observe this, that there remained for the use of the new religion two unrivaled languages, a vast multitude of people, and a people awakened to mental life by the centuries that had passed away, a people united by law and a people at peace.

Having marked the political and literary aspect of those times, let us allude to the moral condition of the people. History will fully justify the asser-

tion that the moral condition of the world was most wretched when Christ came with His Gospel of purity. From the great questions of the rights of man to the questions of individual purity, the scene was dark and the darkness was growing more dense. The recent civil wars had left society in a state of peculiar crime, so that to the usual wickedness of the age there was added a special disregard for life or any rights of man. The assassin lurked in every shadow; the poisoner in every prominent family; the traitor in every council. The times were preparing for the carnival of crime and cruelty which culminated in the atrocities of Nero. From Herod and Herodias, even to the lofty Seneca, all the hands that had power seemed to drip in blood. Herod the Great murdered two of his own sons at the suggestion of interested parties; murdered his own wife, Mariamne; ordered the slaughter of the Bethlehem children; and, when about to die, he ordered the execution of the nobles, that his own funeral might be accompanied by a wide-spread mourning. Josephus says, "Never since the world was made was there a time more fruitful of wickedness." In every age, however, one may find depraved individuals, and hence the real condition of the Roman Empire may be best learned by

calling as witnesses, not its lowest individuals, but its highest. Take, therefore, Seneca, the lofty moralist whom many have mentioned upon the same page with the Christ. Seneca was to the Roman Empire what George Fox was to England, or what Franklin was to the colonies. Seneca taught the highest precepts of his day, and because he was such a moralist he was appointed tutor of the young Nero. The pupil betrayed the weakness of his guide. When Nero came to power his guardian, Seneca, became the low flatterer of the king, and smiled at all the royal vices. He even went further, and suggested to Nero the murder of a younger brother; and when Nero murdered his mother, Seneca wrote a letter to sanction and explain the crime. Add to these enormities the fact that Seneca had himself been banished for a crime that did not happen to please the powers over him, and you have a picture of Roman morals as seen even in the best of Roman men. Seneca himself confesses that he was a lover of virtue, but not virtuous; not a philosopher, but a student of philosophy. "I am occupied with the study of the vices, but all I require of myself is, not to be equal to the best, but only to be better than the bad." The story of Roman and Greek vice as incidentally given in "Plutarch's Morals,"

and the "Annals of Tacitus," leaves the reader ready to confess that no age could have been humbler in these virtues that make up purity of home and private life. Under Nero, knights, senators and ladies of the highest rank appeared upon the stage and sang low songs, such an assemblage as would not now be permitted in the basements of New York. Such, then, was the condition of morals when the Sermon upon the Mount began to be repeated by the Apostles in the classic world. It was time for the voice to come saying, "Blessed are the pure in heart."

Our last inquiry was to be as to the religious phenomena that lay around the feet of the new Lord. As I stated last Sunday, there was no valuable religious faith, no faith universal enough, and pure enough, and firm enough, to be of any value to the soul. The conception of God had been frittered away in the long attempt to make gods of the Cæsars. You may imagine the state of the religious sentiment when Herod desired the people to declare him a deity. One of the kings of the time declared his dead wife a divinity, and ordered the empire to worship her, and he encircled his own head with steel points or rays, that when the light flashed upon them he might seem to wear the halo of the Deity.

It was in this era the simple people concluded that Paul and Barnabas were deities just from heaven, and hence along came the crowd with oxen and garlands for a sacrifice to the new candidates for homage.

Such, briefly, was the political, the literary, the moral, and the religious surroundings of the world's Christ. Into such an empire did the Son of Man come. There was a vast state, that represented the world, to be reformed; there was a marvelous language to be the vehicle of the new truth; there was a decay of the Roman religious faith; there was a decadence of political and æsthetic forms of thought; there was a mental vitality remaining for new guidance; there was a condition of morals that demanded the Sermon on the Mount; there was a dark night setting in that appealed loudly for the mercy of Heaven. Two nations, the greatest that had yet come from the mind of man—the Greek that dazzles the world yet with the memory of its poetry and art, and philosophy and oratory; the Roman with its law, and military skill, and ambition, and with its unrivaled temples and palaces—had been merged into one, and with all their combined riches of mind and soul were descending to ruin together. One hundred millions of the best human beings of earth

had been deserted by all their great kings that had once ruled over them in love and wisdom; had been deserted by the orators that had once instructed the multitude in the theater and the forum; had been deserted by the poets who had sung the sweetest songs in the sweetest languages; had been deserted by the artists who had once wrought upon canvas and in marble; had been deserted by the "grand old Romans" who would do nothing dishonorable. The grave had recalled all the throng of great and gifted souls, and the cradle offered no more inspired children to fill the widening void.

Before that Mediterranean world lay the gloom of night—a night of vice, of ignorance, of sorrow. It was then that Christ arose. His star appeared in the East and men went to worship Him. Mark, therefore, that Christ thus became a turning point in history. The old was dying. The new breathed in Him its first breath of life. Oh, what an immense work was to be done to carry that classic world across from paganism to a spiritual religion! If you will go to India or China now, and note what little power the European possesses to turn those old religions and customs along Christian channels, you will form some idea of what a work lay before Christ and His Apostles when they stood upon the confines

of the Roman empire. The work would have paralyzed any heart less divine than that of the Son of God. Looking out upon the scene, he said, "The harvest is indeed vast, but the laborers are few," and yet, rising to the height of prophecy, He said, through his servant, "Every knee shall bow and every tongue confess."

The Roman religion crumbled rapidly. Porphyry, who wrote almost a score of books to stay the progress of Christianity, complained bitterly that under the sound of the Gospel the old gods had become dumb. This lament of a disappointed pagan, Milton elaborated into verse:

> The oracles are dumb;
> Nor voice nor hideous hum,
> Runs through the arched roof in words deceiving.
> Apollo from his shrine
> No longer can divine.
> With hollow shriek the steep of Delphos leaving
> No trance or breathed spell
> Inspire the pale-eyed priest from his prophetic cell.
>
> The lonely mountains o'er
> And the resounding shore,
> A voice of weeping heard, and loud lament;
> From haunted spring and dale,
> Edged with poplar pale,
> The parting Genius is with sighing sent;
> With flower-inwoven tresses torn,
> The nymphs in twilight shade of tangled thicket mourn.

But not at once is a religious world to be reformed. The works of religion, as indeed all the works of human progress, reach out like the formation of the glaciers or the deltas, over long periods. It saddens the human heart and baffles the intellect to think of the slowness of God's mercy toward His children. The Psalmist anticipated the world's sorrow, when he said: "How long! Oh, Lord! wilt thou hide thyself forever?" But complaints are vain. A thousand years are as a day with the great Hand that made and moves the universe.

Christ and His Apostles, first twelve and then seventy, began their mission in the world. The pagan multitude could no more realize the meaning of a spiritual religion than the African of the Niger can discern the meaning of Bacon's philosophy, or the beauty of the fine arts. Hence, the Roman Empire under the first Christian kings, and under all the popes, combined in various quantities the superstition of the past and the Christianity of the future. Plato and Christ were combined. The incense of Jupiter's altar was burnt before the cross, and the deified heroes of the former age were excluded by the deified Mary and the deified saints of the latter. That pageantry which once filled the streets around the temple of Jupiter or the pantheon

could not die at once; it languished along to repeat itself in the temples of Christian saints, in presence of a half-redeemed, half-pagan throng.

Slowly, indeed, comes the redemption of the human race, but, notwithstanding this painful halting, looking back we behold Christ to be a turning point in the history of our earth. He was the revelation of a new God; the One who proves to be the true God, the only Lord and Father of us all. He was the revelation of a morals that makes the sages of old hang their heads in humility. He did not, like Seneca, teach virtue without being virtuous, nor was he content by being worse than the best, but better than the worst. All compromising, all comparative goodness, terminated at Nazareth. A sinful thought became a stain upon the soul, and the enmity that said, "Thou fool," became a confessed ruin or sorrow in that heart.

At the touch of this new Saviour the principles of law underwent great change, and slowly passed from darkness to light. Christ was especially a great crisis in the history of the soul. The body became the casket, the soul the gem. The soul being thus thrown forward, its home had to be enlarged, and its career extended. The home became enlarged into Heaven, and its career into

immortality. The current of thought, and love, and hope, having been thus changed, as a river that strikes a wall of adamant is hurled back, it gathers volume and velocity as it runs. It receives other streams into its bosom. Every century widens and deepens this river. Defective as the Church still is, it is wise and powerful compared with what it was when Augustine was its theologian, or Leo X. was its pope. Grandly it moves away from material symbols and dead forms toward spirituality, and from the study of the divine records brings forth each generation a better conception of God. As our earth in a long period moved from chaos to its present harmony of water and field and sky, sunlight and starlight, as its chief occupant man moved out from his first home until he filled the continents and its islands with his presence, his acts, his labor and his love; so Christianity, having entered the world by the gateway called Christ, has widened, and is widening, in power and beauty, contemplating no result less than the loving conquest of a world, and the transfer of its millions at last to the happy fields of Heaven.

INFLUENCE OF CHRIST ON LETTERS AND ART.

SERMON III.

INFLUENCE OF CHRIST ON LETTERS AND ART.

"Ye shall know them by their fruits."—*Matt.* 7: 16.

IT is my desire to continue, this morning, thoughts about Christ. To-day let us briefly observe His influence upon letters and art. The history of man is the history of influences. He was not made great by the Creator, but was made small in all directions, mental and moral, and then was subjected to a long line of influences. The Bible account of man represents him as only a large child. He had not learned to distinguish between the voice of God in one part of the garden, and the voice of Satan in another part; nor did he know which one of those contending parties would exert the better influence over his existence. Giving the matter a hasty survey, he finally concluded that the serpent in the tree knew more about the possibilities and successes of the garden than was known by the

other potentate called Jehovah. Hence, the first man hastened to cast his lot into the general lot of the evil one. Thus, as a piece of clay is taken up by the potter, and is shaped by his hand, his foot meanwhile turning the rapid wheel, so man was cast upon the arena of action, a piece of flexible soul, and upon him many hands began to press, and many feet began to turn the wheel. When the potter's clay first falls upon the board it is only a lump; an hour afterward it is seen standing forth an elegant vase, with lines the most graceful conceivable in human taste. So man set forth in life only a lump of mind; the subsequent years point out to us a noble Greek or German or Englishman. To bring about such results, the wheel has been turned a long while, and the molding hand has for centuries pressed heavily and lightly by times. War and peace, climate, the presence of great individuals, the longings of the soul, self-interest, vanity, ambition, the love of money, the love of man, and the love of God have all entered into the great pottery, and have given the shape and then changed the shape of all the clay children that have come and gone on the world-stage. So pliant have the body and soul been, so dependent have they appeared upon the external touch of climate, food,

law, and all association, that some have concluded that there may be a science of history, and that some day a philosopher may sit down and compose a future history of his country, using as data the causes that are at work, making his history out of the inevitable results. The theory is confessed to be good, but it is objected that the time will never come when any one can count, or in any manner detect, the agencies that exist or shall spring up in a wide world. Unexpected famines or earthquakes, or wars, or conflagrations will come and change a nation's drift. Or a single individual like a Luther, or a Savonarola, or a Döllinger, or a Napoleon, will come along, and by himself alone change the page of history for a hundred or five hundred years. Goldwin Smith says beautifully that the scientific minds will always be able to analyze the sunlight and to explain the formation of clouds, but they will never be able to paint a sunset in advance, and tell us how the clouds will marshal themselves, or from what urns the colors will be poured out.

Let us then content ourselves with the remark, that all we children of earth are here for a few years to be molded for good or ill, molded by agencies known and unknown, till at last we shall

all pass into eternity in the shape received here on this rapid wheel.

It is my wish in this and other sermons to ask you to observe the action of Christ upon the centuries, to mark how that hand has helped to shape the thinking and loving clay called man. To observe all the fruits of Christianity would consume all the Sundays of the year, but to gather specimen fruits from the bending tree is the easy and useful task of a few brief discourses.

Let us not be guilty of the rashness that ascribes all the good of earth to the Christian philosophy. There are those who, in a zeal without knowledge, will declare all our arts and sciences, our compass, telegraph, and steam-engine, to have come to the world through the evangelical religion. But all such generalities damage the cause they are designed to support. The youth drilled in this kind of declamation subsequently find that the Greek and Roman worlds were wonderful in science, art, literature, law, and inventions before our era began; that they had grand things which we boastful ones of the nineteenth century can not equal. Four thousand years before Christ came, God, the Father, declared the world to be "very good," and, having such a Creator, the goodness poured into man at his

creation burst forth from the soul all along from Adam to Socrates. As the lilies bloomed before the Saviour pointed out that group of blossoms to His followers, so the mind and soul of man began to bloom in the old world where Hiram worked in gold, where Miriam sang, where Job and David wrote, where the Greek orators thundered and the Greek poets sang. It is safe to say that the greatness of earth began, not with Christ, but with God. We need not take the garlands from the Father to bestow them upon the Son. The grandeur of earth began when God said, "Let us make man in our image." Let us never set up such rash claims for Christianity that when our youth pass from childhood to manhood and womanhood, and begin to read books, they will need to remodel their opinions and unlearn the lessons of early life, and thus run the peril of falling from a once childlike faith into the dreary land of infidelity or doubt. To view the world as having all come from an infinite God, and hence as having bloomed and blossomed always as God's flowers bloom along the lonely Amazon, and as His ocean ripples in smiles always, before the Christian classified any flowers or sailed any ships, and then to behold Christ as having been sent to urge the world more rapidly forward along the path

of greatness, seems the better line of thought; a path most free from pitfalls, and lying under the sweetest, purest light. The world of God was good, the world of Christ only better.

The first great fruit of the Christian tree is certainly the better path of salvation it brought. It brought no wholly new method; but it perfected the ideas that lay only in outline. The idea of sacrifice can never go beyond the death of Christ. After God came with His Lamb there was no more need of the flocks and herds of a thousand hills. And after Christ taught His ethics there was room for nothing more; His hope, His penitence, His virtue, His love, were all the zenith of those moral heights.

Let us pass by these fruits and go to fields less familiar to all our thoughts. It is a great injustice to Christianity if one views it only as being an escape from hell hereafter to a heaven also beyond. The real truth is, Christ has blended himself with all the annals of Christian lands, and has given new color to all the days of the great era that wears His name. As the setting sun shining through a watery air makes all things—fence, hut, log, forest, and field —to be gold like himself, so Christ blends with the rich and the humble details of society, and sheds

His heavenly blush upon the great pageant of humanity marching beneath. If we dare not say Christianity invented the steamboat and the railroad, we may say that it reshaped literature and all the arts, and has deeply affected law and the whole moral aspect of civilization. There is an art which Christianity created almost wholly, asking little of outside aid. Music is that peculiar child. The long-continued vision of heaven, the struggle of the tones of voice and of instrument to find something worthy of the deep feelings of religion, resulted at last in those mighty chants that formed the mountain springs of our musical Nile. There could have been no music had not depth of feeling come to man. The men who went up to the pagan temples went with no such love, with no sorrow of penitence, with no exultant joy. It was necessary for Jesus Christ to come along and transfer religion from the form to the spirit, and from an "airy nothingness" to a love stronger than life, before hymns like those of Luther, and Wesley, and Watts, could break from the heart. The doctrine of repentance must live in the world a while before we can have a "Miserere," and the exultant hope of the Christian must come before the mind can invent a "Gloria." As no religion but that of Jesus could have given us a penitent Magda-

len, so no other creed could have wrought out for us a "Lord be merciful," or a "Nearer, my God, to Thee." An art is the effort of a cultured soul to express itself. When the soul has developed into a love of mountain or field, then it invents the painter's art that it may tell to others and to itself its wondrous feeling. When the soul has developed a love of form, it invents the sculptor's art, that its love may become incarnate and be held on imperishable marble. Thus each art is the outbreaking of a gifted soul. But there must be something within that will burst the prison walls and make this beautiful escape. The religion of Jesus Christ placed in the human heart those ideas and feelings which at last burst forth into the sublime and plaintive music. There could be no music until the soul had become full. Therefore, when John drew his picture of Heaven, when Magdalen shed her tears, when Christ died on the cross, when the Christian martyrs began to die for their faith, when Paul astonished the word with his self-denial and heroism, when the religion of Jesus began to picture the immortality of man, then the foundation of music began to be laid, wide, and massive, and deep. Thus you may glance over all the arts and find that the great ideas and emotions of the new religion affected them all—the

paintings of Raphael and Angelo, and the architecture of all the great middle centuries, great in the construction of temples. Christianity helped to make Angelo and Raphael by furnishing them with grand themes. As no lips can be eloquent unless they are speaking in the name of a great truth, so no painter can paint unless some one brings him a great subject. Heaven and hell made the poet Dante. Christianity made Beatrice. Paradise made John Milton. The mother of our Lord and the last judgment made Angelo. It is the great theme that makes the orator, the painter, the poet. The great theme lifts up the soul and makes it the revealer of a new world. Great minds were sleeping in every age in some cradle in city and village, or lonely cottage, but they passed through manhood and on to the tomb unheard, because no great theme had come along to wake them into a broad, infinite life. What Gray wrote in his elegy possesses as much of philosophic truth as of poetic sweetness:

> Perhaps in this neglected spot is laid
> Some heart once pregnant with celestial fire;
> Hands that the rod of empire might have swayed
> Or waked to ecstacy the living lyre.
>
> * * * *
>
> Their lot forbade: nor circumscribed alone
> Their growing virtues but their crimes confined,

Forbade to wade through slaughter to a throne,
And shut the gates of mercy on mankind.
* * * *
Far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife,
Their sober wishes never learned to stray;
Along the cool sequestered vale of life
They kept the noiseless tenor of their way.

Gray's elegy points out, not the beauty of man, but one of his lesser sorrows, a calamity sweet in its pensiveness.

There is truth rich and touching in those lines, but this truth that for the hour lent such softness to the poet's heart, and which has made immortal the churchyard where "the curfew tolled the knell of parting day," points out also a solemn fact in the history of man, namely, that if the soul is born into an era when no great ideas are passing along—ideas of liberty, or religion, or art—that soul is doomed to the life of only a child, and to die without ever having felt any powerful or divine throbbing of the spirit. Into such a world it was the province and glory of Christ to come, bringing with him the theme of a great human life. Children of genius coming up from the cradle did not find a realm in which "along the cool sequestered vale of life" they must keep "the noiseless tenor of their way," but they stepped forth into a land all glorified by

the ideas and passions of the Christian religion. You all know that Tennyson could not have written his "In Memoriam" had he lived in the days of Homer or Virgil. Then he would have followed the flag of the Ajaxes and the Achilles, and have told us how the body of Hector was dragged around the streets behind the chariot of a savage conqueror. But Christ carried the modern poet away from the dust-cloud of battle and made him sing a loftier song. Great as Homer is, his poetry has only the attractiveness of ambition and of the emblazonry of arms, of the marshaling of troops on a battle-field, and the whole pomp and circumstance of war. Great as Homer was, he could not have written one verse of the "In Memoriam," in all his gifted life. The Christ had not yet come to empty the urns of love, and purity, and immortality, into the human heart.

No military poems have been composed since the coming of Jesus Christ. Before His day the most gifted brains busied their muse with the battles of Agamemnon, Achilles, and Æneas. But when after Christ the highest forms of literature began to come back to the world, the battle-cry, the mad career of ambition, the rolling chariot, the cloud of arrows, had disappeared from poetry, because under the banner

of Christ the Alexanders, and Cæsars, and Neros, and Napoleons, had been at once assigned a lower seat, and the poet, wishing to write for the new world, had to turn from the fields of battle to the fields of the soul. Even the war psalms of David have been silenced by the Christian religion. Things once so noble became only events of calamity and regret. We esteem Washington, and Wellington, and Grant, to have been brave, but our great poets dreamed not of building poems out of these bloody names, because war is no longer the brilliant destiny of man as it was in the classic era, but it is the calamity of time, the misfortune of a half-savage race. Christ has carried our poets away from the old themes, and has asked them to look at all life here and hereafter. He has recalled the God of battles, and has placed the God of love upon the empty throne.

One of the members of the bench of this city has just published an address in which the learned and sincere thinker combats the idea that Christ arose from the dead on the third day, as alleged by the Gospels. There is quite a large number of persons in the world who join in this belief or doubt. But even over these isolated hearts that can not see the body of Christ rising from the tomb of rock,

Christ does yet shed a light of immortality, for in the perfection and marvel of His character they see a destiny of the soul that reaches beyond earth. Hence when some one misunderstood the argument of Judge Booth, and accused him of denying the future life of the soul, he comes forward and says he should be very unwilling to deny or doubt the future life of man. Thus while the judge denies the exceptional raising of Christ, he casts himself fully upon the future life of the soul, of Christ, and of all souls. Thus Christ shapes even the literature of doubt. Thus there is blowing all over the intellectual world, in its most logical hours even, a wind of paradise that fans all the temples that throb with being. That this universal hope comes from the matchless character of Christ, more than from all other sources combined, I have not a shadow of doubt. All the ideas and emotions we carry in our hearts have come to us from fountains dripping far away from ourselves. So invisible are these fountains, so unconscious are our spirits of being fed by any such springs, that we pass along through life often as though we were independent thinkers, and were elaborating all our ideas out of our own minds, as the sun hurls forth light out of its own bosom. But there is little truth in such consciousness. Out-

side of us there is some great potency shaping our thoughts and emotions, as the sunlight colors the woods, and while here and there a mind is standing denying the literal, immediate resurrection of Christ's body, over that very soul hover the character, the teachings, the vision of the same Jesus, making the skeptical mind willing indeed to believe that earth is but the border of a paradise. Thus while a learned judge is battling against a specific shape of the resurrection, or a specific time and place of it, on the one hand, on another hand the same rejected Christ is filling the same acute mind with a blessed vision of a heaven beyond earth. The painter may toil over a landscape without knowing that Christianity has withdrawn the low, and the bloody, and the cruel, from his art; the sculptor may carve at a Madonna or an ideal forehead without being conscious that Christianity has forbidden him to carve a Jupiter or a Laocoon, and so Whittier and Bryant may write without feeling the heavy hand that forbids them to celebrate the glory of the bloody field. Just thus a doubting mind like Judge Booth may even write against Christ without knowing that all the dream and hope of life, lying like white lilies in that embattling soul, were planted chiefly by that lofty Nazarene. The love of Christ gives to those

even who deny the resurrection of his body a firm hope of immortal life.

Far be it from me to claim too much for the Christian religion. I am ready to throw aside any proposition that must be sustained by loud assumption or by pious fraud. There is nothing valuable in this world but the truth. The vision of St. John says the gates of Heaven were shut against "whosoever loveth and maketh a lie." Against all untrue things, against all unfair arguments, the gates of earth also should be closed, for there is nothing at last valuable but the good, the beautiful, and the true. With this principle fully in memory I claim that Jesus Christ has entered deeply into all the lines of emotion and intellect that now so adorn our century. You Christians meet to-day to commune with Him! It is well. But He communed with your country and your literature and your arts long before you came upon the scene of action. He began to shine into the human heart long ago and re-shape it. He fashioned the holy hymns which our fathers sang. He stood by when the Catholics created the Gregorian chant, and where the Covenanters sang their psalms in the wilderness. He invaded the realm of poetic thought, and turned divine genius away from the adulation of bloody

generals to the study of nature and its Creator, the soul and its destiny. He has communed with all the centuries since His Advent, and has penetrated them with a purer, loftier spirit. Mother and child have knelt in prayer by His example and request; the mightiest intellects have shaped their philosophy in the light of Christ, and the old and the dying have tried to go away from earth with some of this Saviour's words upon their trembling, blanching lips.

INFLUENCE OF CHRIST ON THE HUMAN SPIRIT.

SERMON IV.

INFLUENCE OF CHRIST ON THE HUMAN SPIRIT.

"Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of."—*Luke* 9:55.

THE Disciples, indignant that a certain Samaritan village would not receive their Master, asked permission and power to rain down fire upon the unbelieving nation. Christ refused their request, and informed them that they were disgracing their own souls by uttering or cherishing such a wish. They were ignorant of the unworthiness of the nature that could exult in such a rain-storm of fire. In the mind of Christ there lay a different ideal of man's duty and pleasure. In our task of viewing the results of the life of Christ let us come, to-day, to what may be called The Influence of Christ upon Man's Spirit.

By common usage the word "spirit" is used to designate something different from the mind, and something different from the soul. Inasmuch as the

mental world is invisible, and in all ways unknowable, except in the vaguest manner, the words that represent what ideas exist in this department must themselves remain vague, only shadows of other shadows. And yet the word spirit conveys to us an idea, indefinite though it be. When any one alludes to the career of the Prince of Orange, and says he revealed greatness of spirit, what a flight there is of small men and things from our listening heart, and what a rush into it of feelings of nobleness! When some orator declares our century to possess a broad, lofty spirit, we see in an instant a hundred years that would not soil their record with coliseums, or martyrdoms, or inquisitions, or ignorance, or witchcraft, or perpetual slavery. We know not the meaning of the word, and yet when it comes to us the heart turns about toward it, as the sunflower toward the sun. The words "spirit of man" convey to us the idea of a general drift of all the thoughts and feelings of the man. We say the father of waters runs southward. All its rivulets and tributaries point toward the south, and be they in the farth north, or murmur they on the western side of the Alleghany mountains or the eastern slope of the Rocky range, they all murmur toward the noon-day sun, and sigh for the Mexican gulf over their pebbly

and mossy beds. The spirit of man must mean the great drift or current of his life. If he is said to have a great spirit, it must be that all the days and hours of his life, rising in the hidden recesses of the soul, among the unseen hills of its adamant or jasper, at once set forth upon a long journey toward the noon of love and light, that infinite gulf, sweeter than Mexican sea, murmuring in hymn and benediction as they flow. It is said that Fenelon revealed a lofty spirit. This is affirmed of Chalmers. The world says the same of Joan d' Arc. It thinks the same of L'Ouverture. Of such mighty souls the pages of history hold just enough to help us in the study of this word "spirit." As history marches along it will meet with more of these noble children, and when at last the Son of Man shall come in His final glory He will find all the children of earth standing before Him happy in a greatness of spirit.

Leaving the words before you in all their vagueness, I will ask you to mark the influence of that one Nazarene upon the human spirit, the real, though slow, tendency of society to escape from the chains of the small and to fly to the freedom of greatness.

1. These addresses must all begin with the assumption of man's primitive barbarism. No one

will deny the assumption. The only remaining debate is over the question whether this barbarism began, as the Bible affirms, with Eden, or whether, with the rational scientists, it began millions of years back. All consent that man began humbly. Passing, then, from this thought, it is evident that man has risen only as rapidly as has arisen some ideal outside of himself. As fast as the intellect and soul of the world grew and stored away its growth in its literature, and its great exploits and great men, so rapidly did the next generation come up and read the record and rise to the new shape of daily life. Adam and Eve fell because no generations had gone before them to teach them by high written ideals nor by an impressive example. The shaping of life becomes easier the moment the outside world becomes full of guiding thought and guiding conduct. The best Persian king, Darius, suffered no bad conduct and not any wicked conversation to exist around his palace, because he said the atmosphere of royal children must be purer than the common atmosphere of those not born to rule. Thus all life assumes the color of its surroundings, and the Faustine who was a poor, weak queen in the palace of Aurelius, might have been a Mme. Guyon in the seventeenth century, or a Victoria in

the nineteenth. But Faustine lived before woman had become great in her personal independence and virtue. She lived when woman was great only in beauty.

Opening our era and looking into its spiritual secrets we behold Christ surpassing all other agencies in molding the great hours of the soul. The roar of trade and the carnival of vice, indeed, go forward, but so far as the multitude has good hours of reflection and virtue, Christ stands largely responsible for these better moments of mankind. I do not speak now of that spiritual condition alone which we find in the confines of the Church. Beyond the Church, even, all through the length and breadth of society, there are plain indications that there is a lofty One —a great Son of Man—standing up in the world's sight—a source of new light and sentiment. Let me illustrate my meaning. One of the favorite ideas of the age is that of boundless human brotherhood. It glories in the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. This latter lies at the basis of the new government that is creeping like a morning sunshine over the world. Haughty kings and queens have had to step down from their thrones. The man with a soul in him has become equal to the man with a scepter. The "Dairyman's Daughter,"

because of the heart in her bosom, is equal to Queen Bess, or Queen Ann, or Caroline, with a diadem on her forehead. When Christ lived His sublime life, and passed by the purple robes of a Pilate and a Herod, and loved such characters as John and Luke; when He passed by those mighty in violence and gave His hand to those beautiful in soul, the world began to become a brotherhood of which the soul was to be the only essential element, the condition of full membership. All this crumbling of thrones which we behold in our day, this sinking of crowned heads to the level of the multitude, has not come without a cause. The thrones of earth were founded upon the deepest principles of selfishness. Millions of bayonets have stood in frightful lines for the king's support. The history of the last hundred years has been the history of attempts to keep up the same old despotisms. But the equality of mankind has, at the close of each battle in which kings have triumphed, come back to begin its secret abrasion of the flinty rock. No sooner have the kings exacted peace than the voice of human brotherhood has begun, like Abel's blood, to cry up from the ground; and the kings, flushed on yesterday with victory, must begin at once to invent new arms and draft new mercenaries for a fiery conflict. In seek-

ing the cause for such a change, come and coming, we must not rest in climate, or food, or race, or mere fickleness of taste, but must, if possible, find some powerful idea or sentiment invading the human mind. We feel free to affirm that no one influence can any where be pointed out that will equal the power that Christ has brought to bear upon the republican principles in society. The whole soul of His religion is broad. It is man — man, not rich or poor, not crowned, not chained, but man who figures in the great Christian drama of life and death. In the religion of Jesus the rich are humiliated if riches be their idol; in the same religion the poor are exalted if they are in the paths of righteousness. Here it was the widow with two mites outranked the Dives of purple and fine linen. Here it was the first began to be last and the last first. Those whom birth, or riches, or force, had set up in high places, began to sit uneasy on their pedestals of vanity, and slowly up rose Magdalen and all the penitents till forehead of king and forehead of subject found the level of kindred drops. In this transformation scene of the New Testament, children came to the front, and, for the first time on man's world, were made the equals of kings, orators, or philosophers. Of such is the kingdom of heaven.

Many fail to read the bearing of Jesus Christ because they look only at the sectarian agencies at work in the generations. They behold the caste in churches; the difference there between the high and the low; they perceive that most churches are built by the rich for the rich; and in presence of such a spectacle they fail to mark the drift of the abstract Christ. But a church is often only something that conceals Christ, as language is often used to conceal thought. We confess the naturalness of the failure, the perfect logic of the inference. I am not pleading to-day on behalf of any sectarian shape of Christianity. I ask you to get away from human infirmity and look only at Christ. Thus looking, you will see that He is a power leaping over sectarianism and church vanity, as waves leap over the play-houses of children on the sandy shore. In the face of the caste of church, His beautiful equality runs on and penetrates politics, and poetry, and philosophy. When Robert Burns wrote his little poem "A Man's a Man for a' That," he did not draw the inspiration from the Catholic or Calvinistic or Established Churches. Looking at them intently he would never have reached the idea that "hamely fare" and "hodden-gray" weighed nothing against the value of him that ate the "fare" and wore the "gray." Churches

are places where the glory of Christ is blended with the depravity of man; and is stained dreadfully in the blending. Above and beyond, and also through the churches, the spirit of Christ flies, like the angel that went to and fro over the heavens in St. John's vision. There is a spirit of brotherhood in Christ that even while the Church was holding slaves and was glorying in bondage, was upon the outside of the Church pleading for equality and liberty. When it could not touch the pulpit it touched a Wilberforce. When the communion table would not confess it, it spoke in music through Sumner and Stuart Mill. Jesus Christ has always been larger than any existing sect, or all sects, and as the sun shines upon the earth, and besides pours his flood around it and beyond it, touching other planets and emptying oceans of light into the great formless void, so Christ has blessed the Church so far as it would receive His gifts, and then has poured His love around it and beyond it, where the statesmen have sat in council without any creed or any prayer.

It was a great event in the history of the human spirit when the Christian religion came with only one rite for all, and for all only one condition of salvation. Be the forehead crowned with jewels, the baptism for it is the same as the baptism of the beggar.

The brow white as the snow and the brow dark with toil in the sun receive the same sprinkling in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. And through the gates of salvation, all who pass in thereat pass by one name and by one faith. The great and the humble form only one company when Christ makes the human race pass before Him in grand review. And when the estimate of God is thus seen, the old human estimates all fail. As when the Ville de Havre was sinking, all human distinctions failed, and mistress was as servant, and scholar and sailor, the distinguished and the unknown, were all one because earth was disappearing, and eternity was pressing up against dying hearts, so in the world of religion men become all one because all the vanities of earth fade on account of the great God coming, through Christ, into the world.

When one of our generals (General Custar) was making a march, not long since, in the Rocky Mountain solitudes, one of his humblest soldiers, having become separated from the regiment, was found in a lonely ravine with the fatal arrows sticking in his breast. Comrades brought the body into camp. There it was discovered that so humble and obscure was the soldier that his real name was unknown. As he lay upon the ground, there was

no one who could mention the name of any being that had ever loved him, or of the mother who had once pressed him an infant against her heart. But mark now the divine grandeur of religion. When the good general desired a simple service to be held, the Bible refused to utter any other words over the poor dead than those that are read at the burial of presidents and kings. The words, "I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die," are the only ones Christ will whisper over the tomb of man. The ritual of the Episcopal Church, of the Roman Church, of the Bible direct, in such an hour, uttered over that humble body the same words which Bossuet read when the mighty Condé passed from the splendor of France to the quiet tomb. The words that resounded over the beautiful daughter of Charles I., Henrietta, were read here in the lonely hills over a face that had no one to love it, and that revealed no beauty except the sublimity of death.

Eighteen hundred years of this kind of assault against the vanity of man; centuries of those heavenly whisperings about the greatness of the soul and the insignificance of all else; those centu-

ries of warning to the lofty, and of consolation for the poor; those centuries that baptized high and low in the same three-fold name; those centuries in which the mighty and the weak have knelt and received the same communion in memory of one Lord—have silently made human hearts flow together, and have made uprightness of life, the only jewel that can confer distinction upon man. When Christianity came along with its unfolding of Heaven; when it placed our feet, not upon the borders of ambition, or riches, or fame, but upon the borders of eternity, it sunk the distinctions of society and set up new praises on the far off shore.

I do not mean by this that there is no longer any individual vanity remaining upon earth. Would it were possible to announce this blessed condition of things this day. But it is not our privilege to exult over a redeemed earth. There remain in the world millions to whom a man is great in the purple and fine linen he wears, and in the servants that follow him, or in the dead creed that he shouts in public places. Thus Henry the Eighth moved about in a religious pomposity and with hands stained with innocent blood. We speak not of individuals, but of wide and deep influences, and seeking these, we declare that Christ has poured around the

human spirit an atmosphere into which the thinking soul, passing, becomes full of humility and tenderness. All its egotism and loud vanity fall off like rags when it passes from the scenes of men into this temple of the Man of Nazareth. There are millions of spirits that are growing lofty in this warm light of eternity

If, now, you will follow out this begun inspection of the heart, you will find that not only is Christ pouring into the soul the great democratic idea that is blooming now into new and beautiful rights of man, but that Christ has waked in the bosom a group of other feelings scarcely visible when the world was young. Religion has passed from the terrible to the joyous, from the horrid to the beautiful. The heathen tortures himself with knives; the Christian of our day sings words and music, the sweetest that the two arts can produce. The Chinese and all the pagans kill at times innocent little ones as an act of worship; the Christian mother clasps her infant to her bosom and whispers prayers over it, mingling prayers and tears. The heathen philosopher doubted and steeled his heart to his fate; the Christian philosopher beholds the city that hath foundations, and walks calmly down life's decline. At no time in the world's

career so long as death shall come as now it comes, in garments of mystery, will the human mind approach it with joy, except in cases where the feelings outrun the reflection, or in cases where long sorrow has broken the heart and made Heaven a perpetual longing. But Christ has surpassed all influences in sweetening the heart in its relations to the world to come. The immense hymnology of this era, the voices of the outside orators and writers from Burke to Webster, from Franklin, who entreated his daughter never to omit her prayers, to Lincoln, whose spirit was full of the life beyond, all these voices of man in his highest estate, show us that all the souls of our generations are marching along to a music first sounded within the spirit of Christ. Be our fellow men in the Church or outside of it, around them pours this pensiveness of immortality, crowding into the soul like life-blood pouring through the heart. In calm, Christ comes as the eternal beauty; in storm, He comes as the eternal peace. A Christian in mid-ocean wrote as follows:

> Borne upon the ocean's foam,
> Far from native land and home,
> Midnight's curtain dense with wrath
> Hanging o'er our venturous path

While the mountain wave is rolling,
And the ship's bell faintly tolling.
Saviour! on the stormy sea,
Bid us rest secure in thee.

The same sentiment follows us on both land and ocean. It has become a part of the consciousness that makes up human life. It is true many seem to possess it not, but we seek not a sentiment perfectly universal. Not all the human race loves beauty, not all love the pursuit of truth, yet the love of truth is a sentiment that impresses us with its universality and power. So there may be spirits living and dying unaffected by the Son of Man, but when we seek for an influence that is molding deeply the heart, we find it here in Nazareth. Whether Mr. Lincoln repeats his poem,

Oh, why should the spirit of mortal be proud ?

whether Macaulay, dying, wishes to take the sacrament, whether Payson prays, or Bunyan dreams, whether a child commits itself to God at night, or a Cranmer sees Heaven through the light of the fagot, it is all one scene — that of Jesus Christ affecting deeply the inmost spirit of man.

Look into this soul, gradually becoming Christ-like, and find in its beauty the best argument of im-

mortality. As the approaching day in June tips first the mountain tops, and then by slow advance reveals the leaf upon the highest branches of the tree by your window, so the light of immortality, falling down from the sky, strikes first the loftiest hearts, and though they be few in number, and though a sinful multitude lie in ignorance and vice at their feet, yet, upon these lofty ones you may see falling the white light of immortal life. Let us call it Heaven, and place Christ in the midst of the approaching scene.

MINOR QUALITIES OF CHRIST.

SERMON V.

MINOR QUALITIES OF CHRIST.

THE influence of Jesus Christ is so varied in its character that we are in danger of overlooking the lesser results. The atonement may hide other facts, as the great sparkling planets seem, at night, to dwarf the fixed stars. He who would do the great heavens justice must study also the distant Orion and the obscure nebulæ. It is probable that the Roman Church has deeply injured itself by its long, fixed gaze at Christ in only two lights, as a sacrifice for sin and as a ruler of nations. He is thus made an ambitious prince, adding state after state to His empire; and an apologist for sinners, by making perpetual compensation for their daily sins in the offering up of His body in the mass. Men come to this Christ with their sins to be forgiven, not to be cured; and even the dead are brought before Him to be pardoned rather than transformed. Hence that Church comes to us to-day great in its

political power because it has seen Christ as king, and great in its absolution of sinners because it has seen Christ only as a pardoner of the guilty. Here and there a heart has seen Christ in some other light, and has become a Sister of Charity or a self-denying missionary of the cross.

Christ is a wide, deep, moral world. He who finds only one idea or one beauty in Christ, is one who should find upon earth only one plan, and in the heavens only one fount of cloud or light. It is an injurious human weakness if we say Christ is divine, and then feel that we have found all this divinity in the atonement or in the resurrection. Thus have we put Deity into a narrow cell, too narrow to be even fully human, much less divine. That which we call divine must overflow. It must not run like a rivulet, but roll like the sea. There are myriads of persons who can not accept of Christ as an atonement, but who are drawing the guidance and the hope of life from His words and actions. There are others who identify Christ and the Father, and are blessed with this nearness of God; while there are others who feel that Christ is only a super-human being, but who undergo an exaltation of character by following this lofty ideal. Little children find in Christ an image of their own spirit;

the Sister of Charity finds in Him the attributes of a woman; the devoted missionary to the wilds of the Indian finds in the same Christ the attributes of a hero. This comes not to pass because the human heart can see in the world only what it wishes to see, and nothing more and nothing less, but sees all this variety of moral worth because it is all in Christ just as there is a fullness in God's material world. There will always be more in Christ than any heart can get out of Him. It is my wish this morning to ask you to look at some of the minor qualities in this great Son of Man and God.

1. He possessed a simplicity of mind that gave Him at once to all conditions of men. He was divorced from all speculative philosophy and wedded to universal practical life. The deep inquiries and unusual language of philosophers create a gulf between them and the people. The world at large cares nothing about Aristotle, and Plato, and Descartes, and Kant, because these names are entangled amid the unusual verbiage and the final arguments of abstract thought, and seem to stand thus afar off from the real world of man. Christ moved amid all the great ideas that have concerned all the philosophers from Greece to England, but He moved along with the assumptions of one who depended not

upon argument, and with the simple language of common life. Christ did not pass by the realm of debate, but He moved through it with a faith, and ease, and naturalness, and simplicity, that made Him the voice not of a few scholars, but of the world's vast majority. His words were the simplest in speech and His laws the most acceptable to reason. The obscure arguments of the abstract philosophers are more the world's misfortune than its delight. They may be a necessity, but they are not a popular shape of intellectual action. At last the world becomes weary of the terms and the arguments, and the dust of the ages bears witness to the world's neglect.

It is now well known that the highest education itself tends to a simplicity of words and thought. Youth and romantic years may love obscure dreamings, and there are conditions of intellect that delight in the unfathomable of thought, but the world as a vast body of rational beings delights in truths the clearest and language the simplest. As the open sunlight is dear to all, so men love to sit down in the best light of truth. And if this is not true of all the days of men, it is true of their best days at least, the days of most sincerity and solemnity. To all who live in lands that know the

history of Christ, His words come in the last days, the most sober days, and alone satisfy the heart. Dying hours utterly despise the stately language of philosophy, theological or metaphysical, and betake themselves to simplicity. There is no pomp in the chamber of death. The greatest statesman or the greatest scholar whispers his final words in the language of perfect simplicity. This comes not because the physical organism has passed from power to weakness, but because the solemnity of the hour has utterly displaced vanity. Coming into the world as little children, thus we also pass out of it. Now, the matchless simplicity of Christ fits Him to these last hours of man, and those who have all their life long dealt in magnificence of words and theory, at last say, "Read me the words of Jesus. They alone are clear, sweet and sublime." Had Christ enveloped Himself in the drapery of a stately eloquence, or in the obscure arguments of the theologians; or had He sought the associations of scholarship, and burdened His text with a world of quotation and allusion, what a mighty throng, not only of earth's humble ones, but even of earth's great, would have been compelled at last to turn away from Him and seek elsewhere the simplicity that seems so full of peace. There is a

place in the world for all the splendor of rhetoric, and music, and art, and for all the jewels of gold and the fabrics of velvet and silk; we decry none of these things, but there are times when all these splendid things count as naught. There are times when the spirit asks, not for a great chorus of music, but for a soft strain, a subdued song from one voice, or an air from an instrument where a hand rests upon the strings. There was an hour when Mozart wished to hear only the Requiem. Thus in the vast world of thought there are times in the life of each being, however educated and great, when the soul asks not for argument, but for food; not for magnificence of sound, but for simple words of life and hope. Christ is fortunate in that he uttered words just such as men need in their best hours, words not noisy like a military band cheering men onward to ambition and bloodshed, but sweet like a harp, helping the soul to pass resignedly from these shores. In our days of vigor and success and world-worship, there may come moments when we may wish Jesus had left behind Him masterpieces of eloquence, such as we can now read over the graves of Sumner and Burke, those giants of argument and passion and language, but these hours are rather the children of temporary

vanity than of true greatness. Do not permit these proud days to deceive you. The time is not far away when you will feel that it is not in the power of rhetoric or passion to add any thing to the words of Jesus Christ. The metaphysician may secretly regret that the Nazarene did not discourse like a Plato or a Locke; the poet may wish that the Son of Man had said more about land, sea, and sky, about opening spring-time or the falling leaf; the Calvinist and Trinitarian may wish they could find in the Lord's discourse a system that should more fully shadow forth their own; and devotees of science may feel at times that the Cosmos of Humboldt surpasses the simple story of the Gospels; but these longings and complaints are only the result of narrow specializations. Christ spoke for a whole world, for the times of its greatest need, and the wish of the specialist is engulfed in the wide, infinite wish of mankind. Our wishes are the style of time: Christ's manner the style of eternity.

2. Let me ask you now to mark the attractiveness of Christ. What a calamity to mankind, had Christ not spoken from an affectionate heart. Suppose He had stood apart from society like a peripatetic, or had spoken from the icy retreat of the stoic, or with the vanity of a schoolman. The

words, unattended by friendship, would have died like seeds in the earth where there falls no sunshine. The words of a father differ all the world over from the words of a mother. In later years, young men fallen into temptation have remembered the words their mothers had spoken. The counsel of the father may have been wise and good, but the mother's words are transformed into eloquence by the love that envelops and penetrates them. The father's advice is rhetoric; the mother's, a sword, a flame, a hymn. The former is language for the intellect, the latter an arrow in the heart. Thus Christ breathed into His language such a solicitude, such an affection, that he does not speak to us as an orator, but as our friend. He spake as never man spake; not simply with a higher wisdom, but with a warmer sympathy. Did Plato, did Zeno, did Seneca ever so love the people and so cling to them as a mother to her children? When we recall the teachings of the Saviour, and then around them, such as they were, throw that affection for man which finally led Him to endure the cross, we have the elements of a power which shall hand those words along to the end of human history, though ten thousand years shall intervene. Words are of themselves empty vessels. They are only so many

cups of silver and gold. They await equally the poison of the flatterer, or the boastings of the egotist, or the romance of the lover, or the wisdom or solicitude of a divine soul. Eloquence is nothing but the filling of these cups with the earnestness and vital love of the soul. Words from the garrulous are chalices full of air put to the lips; words full of such love and pity as were in the sacred heart are cups full of crystal water offered us in a burning desert. Language depending wholly upon the quantity and quality of soul crowded into it, the intercourse of Jesus with the world, will always stand clothed with a wonderful power. His words will charm the living and the dying to the end of man's career. His words were urns of gold that carried His soul.

3. Next to this sympathy which secured the perpetual attractiveness of Christ, let us observe the general breadth of His mind and spirit. All the statements of this Son of Man are broad statements. His baptism, His faith, His atonement, His maxims, His ethics, are all set forth in the widest terms known in language. He is the way, truth, and life, but the particulars of the way, the details of the truth, the manner of the life, are omitted. He says, "I am the resurrection and the life," but there is

no commitment to the idea that these particles of flesh will ever come back to the soul again, or to the idea that a new body will be given man in the new world. He calls Himself "Saviour" but He waits not to place Himself upon the platform of the various theories regarding the manner of the great price paid or to be paid for the soul. He seems to love the broad name of "Saviour" or leader of the soul, that all, of whatever age, child or father, of whatever condition, learned or unlearned, may take the grand word to heart, and draw life and peace from its merciful, elastic breath. On account of this tendency of Christ to deal in universals, He has stood forth in beauty and light even when around those who pretended to follow Him has roared the storm of debate. The long and bloody conflict that has often made the Christian Church resemble the arena of Nero's gladiators, or the orgies of the painted Indians, arose out of these limited intellects which emerged from cells and convents and inquired whether the atonement was limited or general, whether the halo about the Christ was derived or underived, and whether the Holy Ghost proceeded eternally from the Father alone or from both the Father and the Son. Even the great and progressive Döllinger, in his recent convention, has drawn up

some new articles about the Holy Ghost's proceeding "patre filioque," thus showing how difficult it is for a man or an age to divest himself or itself of the theological fantasy, that deep-seated hallucination. Little of the world's religious turmoil arose around Christ. But from the human mind, full of darkness and vanity — a sad combination — rolled the smoke and fire, as from an infernal Vesuvius, that have buried in ashes and death cities and homes which under Christ alone would have been Edens of happiness. Above all things religion is a science of generalities. It lies broad and deep like the expanse of heaven, and like the same heaven will utter few particulars. Astronomers tell us Saturn lies within beautiful rings, and that Jupiter has equal day and night, and that one season runs through all its year, but here these wise men pause. Whether beings like man dwell there, and gather wild flowers, and hear bird songs in eternal spring, and whether they sail ships upon oceans that know no wild storm, they are all silent as those awful depths. Religion surpasses even astronomy in the breadth and vagueness of its generalizations. The theologians, misconceiving its genius, have loaded it down with particulars from which it will now take them all their remaining life to retract. From their lofty mount of egotism they

must work their way down to the valley of humiliation. Unable any longer to tell the multitude just when and how God made the universe, they must part with old statistics and go to the generality that "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." So all through the Christian system where the theologians have been most specific they must suffer the deepest humiliation and make the most marked retreat.

To illustrate further the breadth of Christ, the safeness of His generalizations, mark the flow of His thoughts about heaven and hell. In the hands of this Christ there is an indignation of God indeed, but it is so reasonable and lofty that the human mind accepts of it and feels its mysterious power. The theologians sought to know the Infinite most fully, and hence they beheld the wrath of God moving toward the non-elect, or the non-baptized, and from all eternity compassing the destruction of the vast majority of earth's throngs; but in the philosophy of the Lord the indignation of God moves out against the impure, the deceitful, the drunken, the cruel, the murderous, the willful offenders against God and man. There is a vast sentiment of justice in the human heart. We all know that God is just. Hence in Shakspeare all

the mighty ones that did wrong, from Othello the Moor to the dazzling intellect of Lady Macbeth, move all toward the bar of justice, and the reader of those dramas, or the spectator before the curtain, feels that something within is gratified when death overtakes all of Avon's evil ones. Endure earth ever so long, this sentiment will remain in the human heart as eternal as its love of friends or its appreciation of the beautiful. But in the hands of many of the theologians this deep sentiment of right and wrong, and of good or ill desert is so outraged, it is so compelled to take in foreordained wrath, and wrath suffered for sins, in which the sufferer took no part, and of which he has not the feeblest consciousness, that it ceases almost to believe in God, and in a maze so dark says: "Come what may, I can only await a doom that seems alike destitute of reason and terrible in power." The hope of the world lies in the possibility that the multitude will read its destiny more and more in the teachings of Jesus Christ. In His Gospel this indignation is the holy indignation of a just God. It is not a malicious flame shooting out like the tongue of a serpent toward those who sinned in Adam before they lived, shooting out from eternity, with the hiss of a perpetual and infinite rabies, but

it is the justice which the human mind knows should follow all willful sin. The justice of Jesus Christ is that justice of which the tragedies of Shakspeare are a faint image, and which has been reflected in the laws of states, and has always been imbedded in the soul. Oh, sad day for the Church and for human virtue when the teachers of Christianity turned away from the broad and simple Christ and asked the metaphysicians, and monks, and fatalists, to give them a detailed map of the Infinite One. A Roman priest not long since permitted a convert from Protestantism to bury his infant along with the Protestant dead if he would inclose in the little coffin a lump of consecrated earth, to guard the little Catholic soul from sharing in the Protestant hell. So the little holy earth was placed in the coffin to come between the infant and the divine wrath. And a few weeks since Archbishop Purcell, in speaking of a railway workman killed in an accident, who had, being a Protestant, lived happily with a Catholic wife, said that the children of that poor widow were not only fatherless, but were doomed to perdition at last, for Heaven could receive only the families of the purely Catholic.

I mention these caricatures of the Creator because they have transpired most recently, and hence can

not be charged upon the sixteenth century; but I could, in a few moments' reading, have found, away from the Roman Church, notions of God's justice as injurious and as disgraceful. From him who studies the Son of Man, all this desecration of the divine disappears, and the righteousness of the Father in Heaven becomes the preventing fear and the dear hope of every heart. That God will approve of nothing wrong, is the hope of the world as to virtue. That He will reward those who love Him is the refuge of peace for each soul. In presence of the God unveiled by Christ, the mother may in perfect hope lay down her infant in the grave. She needs place no holy earth in its coffin, no baptism upon its forehead; she need read no ambiguous words from the rubric or the confession, for the God in Christ is a great God, and none but the consciously and willingly sinful need tremble at His wrath. As for the children in their tombs, they need no intervention of holy water or holy ground. All the maledictions of earth, all the condemnatory laws of all the bishops, all the anathemas of a thousand popes, could not detain one of those little souls a moment from the bosom of God.

Now, these are some of the minor tones in that sublime symphony called the Christ. And if these

are only a few notes from the masterpiece, what must the whole diapason be to the soul that shall listen to the music as it rolls along from the human to the divine? Lending your ear at times to this harmony of love and truth, you will at last beg the children of men to cease their clamor, to terminate their discord, and leave you to fill your longing, hoping spirit with this ravishing requiem from the sky.

THE FUTURE OVERWORKED.

SERMON VI.

THE FUTURE OVERWORKED.

"Now is the accepted time."—2 *Cor.* 6:2.

IF it be true, as the optimist teaches, that every evil has its good, it is also true that every good carries its own evil. One statement is as true as the other. The meaning of all such statements must be that life is full of conflicting forces, physical and spiritual, and that to balance these in such a manner that usefulness and happiness may result, is the problem and duty of man.

Among the supposed virtues of this world, men have assigned a high place to its great law of progress. It is the consolation of all hearts that we are all moving forward to all that is noble in intellect and sentiment. The privilege of this forward movement is at least supposed to be offered to all, and there are many who contend that not simply the privilege but the destiny of progress rests upon all. This at least is true, that a grand law of

advance pervades the universe, and reveals itself in the seed of the oak, in the development of animal life, and in the unfolding of the human intellect. We look back and at once pity our fathers, for our boat has floated away from their barren, wintry shore, far down to what seems to us the land of spontaneous harvest and perpetual spring. Progress is real and beautiful, a great law of man full of present happiness and of hope. Of this great good what now is the evil side? What is the drop of poison in this cup? It is found in the fact, that this coming glory of the future is always drawing the heart away from the present. In our inability to see two objects at once, we gaze at the future and sit down and wait for it to come. Thus the great outlook of the soul is suffered to neutralize the idea of doing with one's might what the hand finds to do.

There is no way for abating the evil, so far as all the world is concerned, but the evil is grave enough to merit notice, and then there may be here and there an individual heart that will perceive the evil and fly from it. It would be a great gain to our store of practical philosophy and religion if we could learn to feel that the future does not create nor bring progress: it only receives it. It is only a

storehouse into which the present empties itself. If the present be barren, the future remains empty also, and, moving itself further away, waits for a laborious, patient present to precede it. The future is only the final estimate, the summing up of all the former days. There is no honor, or learning, or salvation, in it, except so far as the present is busy over the learning, or honor, or salvation.

It is to be regretted that we make bad use of the virtues of the soul. God implanted hope and expectation in the breast to cheer it, to make it able to bear dark hours, and as such it is one of the noblest virtues of the soul. Paul places it down among the divinities of earth, between Faith and Charity. But this virtue planted in the bosom to cheer it, is perverted from its office and is transformed into the thing hoped for. Hope is metamorphosed into actual riches, actual goodness, actual religion. Instead of toiling at a new world, we think hope is busy fixing it all up for us. Years pass by in dreamy indolence because that great thing called progress seems to be out in the advance preparing all the forms of blessedness, earthly and heavenly. We have personified hope and progress until they have become actual laborers, going on before us, making paths and building homes for us. And so well are they doing this

world-work that nothing remains for us but to dream and wait. Wonderful and essential as the demand of expectation is in all the days of man, yet it seems that at all times man should look into the face of the present and see what meaning there may be in its quiet countenance. The present is the eventful day. The future is only the summing up of that which has gone by.

In the discussion of our theme to-day, all the issues of life are alike interested. Religion, and education, and business, and home, and the uncounted details of a busy life, are all affected by this potency of the future. They are all liable to be cheered by its proper use or blinded by its bad application. All the passions of the soul need regulation. Man can not, like a brute, follow nature. In food, and drink, and work, and play, and sleep, man dare not follow the simple desires of his physical organism. If a man sleeps to the uttermost from boyhood up to middle life, his mind weakens and he becomes an idiot from too much sleep. He may, also, fail and die from too little. So all through the catalogue of physical and mental tastes and tendencies man can not follow nature. He was destined to follow another guide called reason, a being appointed of heaven to discriminate, to impel and impede, to cheer

and to warn. Thus ambition, and the love of knowledge, and the love of money, and all the appetites of the body and soul, are to come to the bar of reason and receive their orders for the day,—orders of advance or retreat.

To cultivate reason is, therefore, one of the highest duties, because then her wise orders are issued to all the other impulses of the soul, and a varied world passes from chaos into harmony. Is there any thing then in which we can trust nature alone? Are there any hours that are independent of this reason? It appears not. But there are hours into which it has not been the world's custom to bring reason into play. There are hours in which we all act like so many little children, and know no law but nature. Among these hours are those of hope and fond anticipation. To-morrow is loaded down with the things we intend to do and to have. There is no faculty of the soul so overworked as this faculty of expectation. If all shall come out of the future which we are all pouring into it, we shall have a marvelous world before long. The tame, sad facts of these days will soon give place to islands of milk and honey, and to palaces of Aladdin.

The influence of the future is, like the love of

ambition or gold, to be regulated. If we suffer this beauty of futurity to run wild in our breast, it makes us sickly dreamers, who will die at last as an infant. What God gave us as a consolation in sorrow, men transform into a reason of existence, an object of life. The morrow thus neutralizes the present, and to-day is empty and worthless. When a young man lives in the expectation of a fortune, to come to him in middle age, how for the most part it utterly ruins his youth. Books, professions, industry, ambition, self-culture, are all robbed of worth by this powerful expectation. The young man is thus slain by his future. But by his side a companion who is doomed to a life of toil finds in books and ambition and culture and profession a daily power and happiness, and by them he rises in mind and soul. To the former the future was overloaded. It was too rosy, too certain. It eclipses the present. Expectation often surpasses poverty and sorrow as a blight of life. In the early years of life there is nothing but the future before the mind. The young are excluded from the great fields of usefulness, of bar, and pulpit, and authorship, and trade. Hence, the first twenty years are years of only expectation. This may be a reason why, in our mature period, all still look at the

morrow. Having spent twenty years in the service of this kind of romance, perhaps it becomes a part of our nature difficult to escape. Be the cause this or that, the fact remains that here we all are to-day still loading the morrow down with our intentions. We can not put away childish things.

It is not the province of the pulpit, perhaps, to point out what injury this habit is working in business, and politics, and culture, and to home life and general happiness. The whole field is, at least, too large for our hasty survey. Let us limit our thoughts to the great paths of philanthropy and religion. The evils which the rosy future brings to those departments are subject of thought large enough and painful enough for one hour.

It would not be beyond the truth were I to say that there are a thousand persons in this city who intend to bless mankind by gifts of benevolence. When a little more gold has been gathered, and a few more gray hairs have come, and the dear future shall have come a little nearer, they are going to found asylums, and art-galleries, and libraries, and colleges, and, bursting the chains of self, love the large suffering world. These intentions are the most solemn and noble of their hearts. Nearly every clergyman has conversed with these good men, and

can bear witness to their sincerity. These are good people at heart. But we come, now, to the defect in their scheme—a defect that hides itself, and, like Satan, will deceive the very elect. The calamity of these well-wishing hearts, and the calamity of the long-waiting public is simply this, that there is no such future any where as that one pictured in the dream of these benevolent men. The day when they shall feel that they have heaped up enough of gold; the day when they will be willing to part with it; the day when they will love the poor community, and will desire to lay down great offerings at its feet, and when the future so long dreamed of will come down in golden colors out of the sky, will never come. The morrow is only to-day carried forward. Of the thousands of persons who to-day fully intend to spend their money for God and society, only one or two will find the future what they thought, and, perhaps, that one or two will be the humblest of the thousand, both as to the power to give and the scope of the benefaction. The future, to a man in middle or mature life, will contain very little not to be found now in his soul. To-morrow is only a point in the river a little nearer the sea. The same water flows there that flowed a hundred miles above. It is a sad thing

when one must point to these passing hours, and must remind his neighbor and confess for himself that they are the photograph of the remainder of life. To-morrow will only be to-day rolled on. While we are passing along through the early years, it is lawful for us to load the times to come, for then the body and the mind are strengthening for work, and the school house stands between us and the great duties of the world; but when manhood has fully come, this worship of to-morrow should be given up, and the full significance of the present should burst upon the intellect and soul. All the dazzle of to-morrow, after that, is only an *ignis-fatuus.*

There are colleges about this city that have been waiting twenty years for the good intentions of rich men to ripen. There are many forms of public beneficence that have been reposing in manuscript for a quarter of a century, waiting for the future to evolve for them a reality from the generous and promising heart. But the real truth is, there is nothing in the morrow that was not in the yesterday, and one by one these designing, promising hearts have fallen asleep without having come up to the golden days when benevolence would be a pleasure and money would no longer enslave the soul. The

time for action is in the full noon of life. As that is the time when orators utter their best orations, and poets write their best poems, and painters spread their most truthful colors — the time when all life blooms — that is the time for the works of benevolence and religion. What use to make of one's property, is a question that demands the highest powers of the mind. To bring to that problem the weakness of old age is to insult reason, and to peril one's own name. Mankind is doubly robbed by the romance of the future; robbed in that many die without having remembered mankind, and in that many others remembered the world foolishly. They left second childhood to dispose of their fortunes. If there is one phrase which should be graven upon the heart, it is the Bible phrase, "Now is the day of salvation." The divine words apply on all sides. Not only Heaven, but also all the great objects this side of Heaven, are depending upon man's realization of the meaning of the word *now*. Man has been successful only in these circumstances where he could not wait. When events have hemmed him in, when his ships have been burned behind him, when his enemy has pressed him closely upon the field of battle or of the intellect, then, when the gates of the future have been closed, and those of the

present thrown open, man has always been a hero. Some of the most biting aphorisms of the great writers have been uttered against the spirit of delay that broods over the soul. One says, "We pass our life in deliberation, and die in it." "Delays have dangerous ends," says Shakspeare. "To-morrow is a satire on to-day," said Young. But Cervantes states well the folly of feeding eternally upon hope. He says: "By the street called By-and-by, you reach a house called Never." Thus in the literature of all ages, from the Bible to the page of the Spaniard, you find that mankind early learned the imposition that expectation was playing upon it, and sought out biting words to warn us against its snare. The great mission of hope is to inspire the present. The dazzling glory of the future is only to make the present all light around the foot. But if man sits down and waits till he shall come to the dazzling morrow, the morrow at once becomes dark; it takes back every banner of light, because the gazing soul has not read aright its significance. As the past throws its light upon the present, tells us what thinkers, and toilers, and singers, said and sang, and what the patriots fought for in those long years, so the future pours its inspiration out upon the present, that, aroused by the world past and the world to

come, the soul may realize the supreme greatness of life, and rise to deeds worthy of the hour. A promise to be or do in the far future is a kind of airy, dreamy lie. It should seem that our politics, our acts, our love to our neighbor, our acceptance of Jesus Christ, are all to be slaughtered by this new enemy called "expectation." We are all intending to live. All the varied good of earth, from kindness to the poorest mortal to a profound worship of the Almighty, is lying in our intention. But the scene is delusive. It is a mirage in a desert. When we have moved on we shall find that no river or lake was really before us; it was all burning sand.

We have all set up a new divinity. We have richly decorated her shrine, and our worship is regular and passionate. And this divinity is not money. It is not pleasure. It is a beautiful, ethereal being called The Future. To her care we are committing politics, art, home-life, and religion. This goddess is coming to us after a few years with her arms full of all kinds of salvation. We need only worship and wait.

Was there ever such a false worship along the Niger or the Ganges? The future is not an actor; it is only a result. It adds up the transactions of to-day.

When, after an absence of twenty years, you visit the old homestead and find the old orchard gone, and the old house dismantled, its door-side moss-covered, you say, hastily, "What changes time has wrought!" But it was the agencies acting in time, the daily storms, the frosts, the winds, the worm, that slowly transformed the old home into decay. Thus the Future has no potency. The present is working all sad changes, and the future is only the point at which the heart must break.

When hope cheers the present, and acts as an inspiration to its toil and goodness, then hope is a good angel; but the moment hope acts as an opiate upon the present, it becomes a poison of the soul. Rather than worship her, one would better deify the present and come each morning with new homage. "Now" is an idea that should be more deeply studied by those capable of any usefulness. The money-makers alone have fathomed its depths. They alone "never put off till to-morrow what can be done to-day." But the moralists, and religionists, and possible benefactors, have not studied enough the little word. All the good ideas of earth, even the invitations of Jesus Christ, are postponed, and postponed until these great "hopes deferred make the public heart sick." The arguments in favor of

"Now" are short and sharp. 1. The morrow is uncertain. The only sure thing for the future is a tomb for each one. It may come next autumn, next winter, next spring. It may come by a sinking ship, or a burning church, or a fever that shrouds the intellect, or a paralysis that strikes the heart. The probability that you will approach death slowly, and that your good schemes will come up before you in that hour for final and wise adjustment, is only one in fifty. 2. The soul needs in these years the education, the noble consciousness, that comes from duty already done. The intention to do right things and beautiful things is poor food for the soul. But when one in the noon of life can already see good works back of him, then his present is free forever from emptiness, and the nobleness of yesterday becomes a part of the soul's essential character.

What the mind needs in the last part of life is the consciousness of having lived the former part well. Dryden says: "To-morrow, do thy worst, for I have lived to-day." The heart that intends to do good deeds is in great peril. If any thing comes between it and its deeds it becomes at once a zero. It is like the Persian prince who divided his life up in decades — the first decade for travel, the second for government, the third for friendship, the

fourth for God. A magnificent appointment, but overthrown by an incident—he died in the first ten years. But suppose life to run along, and death to be far away; what man most needs is that the large part of his life should come first, that all the subsequent years may be lifted up and held up by the strong arms of the past. It is melancholy to have the soul realize the greatness of earth when it is just leaving it forever.

But time fails us. Let me remind you that the great outside world needs your benevolence and religion now. In twenty years the countless children and the countless poor of this city and the land will have passed beyond the valley of blessing. There is a multitude which no one can bless but you, and you can do that service only now. The good that shall come a score of years hence will come to a different throng. Those that now swarm around you will have passed away, uneducated, uncheered, unloved. Some poetess, sitting in a lonely room and reading about the tears of love and pity that had fallen over some orphan's grave, wrote a touching rebuke in the poem, "Love me before I die." After our friends have gone from us, we love them. With such a land as we possess, full of liberty and wealth, with such multitudes around that

need all things for mind and soul; with such a leader as Jesus Christ, and with the morrow all wrapped in uncertainty, and the tomb not far away, the words that should most burn in the heart are these: "Now is the accepted time."

If any further argument were needed to convince you what an empty thing that "future" of the heart is, I would find it in showing you that future itself. It can be seen and measured. Ten years ago you promised certain good deeds after the next ten years were out. All was decked in the hues of the rainbow. The profession of religion would be easy, and all the details of a noble soul would come easily then. What an outlook it was! But to-day those ten years have ended, and this is that very future once seen as being near to Heaven. Oh, how its flowers have faded! It was a mirage, and here is the same dreary, lifeless sand.

Be wise to-day; 'tis madness to defer;
Next day the fatal precedent will plead;
Thus on, till wisdom is pushed out of life.
* * * * *
Of man's miraculous mistakes this bears
The palm. "That all men are about to live."

AMONG THE FOUNDATIONS.

SERMON VII.

AMONG THE FOUNDATIONS.

"Of whom the world was not worthy."—*Hebrews* 11:38.

LET us recall to mind some of the great men of the Bible. Each institution, be it state or church, or college or school of philosophy or art, sets forth from the bosom of some man or men like a river rolling down from the mountains. All these great outward things, from the Porch at Athens to the Academy of France, are the image of certain human spirits. As lightning leaves its marks upon the granite cliffs, so great minds, passing through their three-score years, mark deeply that part of society in which their feet fell as they marched. The flying steamer and the flying train tell us that Watt and Stephenson have passed by just in advance of the steamer and the car. The telegraph tells us that Morse has been and has passed on. The practical industry of the world, the abandoning of old implements, the rapid appearance of new machines

and new tools, tell us there must have been a Lord Bacon some where, leading reason away from folly, to place it in the path of usefulness. Coming to politics, we see on all sides in the new free governments of earth, footprints of the Barons fighting with King John, and of Washington and Lafayette struggling in the wilds of the new world. The broad earth, with all its mental and emotional contents, with all its truth and beauty, is only a place where man in some form of greatness has been. In the old red sandstone of New England, rocks are pointed out upon which great birds ran thousands of years ago. Perhaps before the human race lived those birds spread their half-made wings and hurried along on foot before the coming storm. And in those days the storms were terrific. The clouds swept hot and low, and the whole earth trembled with the thunder. Along the great western river there are cliffs a thousand feet high, and between them a valley five miles wide, the scene telling us what a mighty river flowed in that vale before man came to the Garden of Eden. Thus the moral earth bears evidence of its mighty past, and in all its learning, and politics, and art, and religion, says to us: "Here the giants have been. These are the paths trodden by their heavy feet."

In Africa, hunters seeking large and noble game (more noble than the murderous, avaricious creature that seeks the ivory spoils), come at last to places where the wild rice is all beaten down, where a road lies as though the army of Xerxes had passed that way. The wild huntsmen are full of delight, for they feel the presence of the great ivory-bearing brutes. Thus in the higher world of the intellect and soul we come upon great paths that tell us in a moment that some mighty ones passed along there yesterday. But these paths are not a desolation. They are hedged in on both sides by flowers; the air above is redolent with incense, and both before and back of the discoverer there seems a paradise.

What is our varied world now but a rich piece of work from the hands of the gifted minds in all former times? Our whole world is the photograph of all past genius.

Such being the nature of this scene of human life, we should expect our Christian religion to be also the remains of some old commotion in the mind and bosom of man. Such greatness could not have come from nothing any more than philosophy came without any Bacon or Cousin; any more than liberty could have come without any Washington or any heroes of the battle-field. Out of nothing comes

nothing. (*Ex nihilo nihil fit.*) Hence, opening the Christian Book and reading its strange page from Moses to St. Paul, we are bound to say, "Here some moral giants have passed by." For the wild rice is all beaten down, and branches of broken trees strew the way, and the wild region looks as though horsemen and chariot had gone by with a shout. Looking at the Decalogue for an hour — a reading will not answer the demands of the Ten Thoughts — studying for an hour, or a day, that digest of principles, and remembering in what an age that generalization was made, when slaves were flying from bondage and scarcely knew which was the better, bondage or freedom, the heart must be lost to reason if it does not say over those laws, here a huge intellect has been hurling around him the large ideas of life, standing amid the ideas of sin, like Samson between the columns of the temple, needing only to reach out his arms and the whole fabric tumbles.

Pass from the Decalogue to the political career of Moses, and there the same vastness appears, only it is not a vastness of intellect, but of love. He led a large multitude tenderly, as though they were his children. By day he advised, and cheered, and guided them; by night he wept and prayed. Not

often do great intellect and great love combine in one soul. Generally the one draws away the life-blood of the other. The perpetual thought abates the love, or the perpetual sentiment abates the thought. But here and there in human history comes the divine soul, and is equal to the two destinies, and as the sun in the heaven can burn up a Sahara on the one hand, and paint the lining of a daisy on the other, so along comes a mortal here and there who can hurl forth great thoughts with his brain, and then sit down and weep for the humblest beggar or little suffering child. Moses was one of these. The greatness of law, of politics, of freedom, was upon him. His mind rejected the pomp of Egypt's palaces that it might be free. All the learning of that powerful empire crystalized in his brain. He drank in wisdom as a sponge drinks water, and yet, in all the subsequent years of his career he was tender-hearted as in the days when Pharaoh's daughter took him first in her arms. He was a union of power and meekness.

Pass from the law-giver to the poets of the Bible, and here re-appear marks of human greatness. The man who wrote the book of Job was no ordinary intellect. Imagination is one of the highest faculties. It alone is able to rise to some conception

of the universe. The common practical mind knows nothing about God's world. It moves about in the market place, and stands in its shop all day and all year, utterly incapable of thinking of the whole heavens and the whole earth. It knows the numbers of its own family and the value of certain articles in the market. But along comes the man with imagination, and lo, the universe opens its gates to his foot. His heart wanders off into the eternity past and to come. He becomes a Newton or a Herschel in astronomy, or a Humboldt in science, or a Cousin in morals, or a Milton in poetry. Among these place the men who wrote the book of Job or the Psalms, or the glowing rhapsodies of Isaiah and Ezekiel. Who in our day could surpass these voices in the richness of their imagination and in the sublimity of their song?

What we call civilization is not the human condition that speaks always the most intense spiritual words. In a broad age the heart may love so many things that it loves nothing deeply. When the authors of the book of Job and of the Psalms wrote, there was nothing grand in the world but religion. There were no arts, no politics, no sciences, no romance. The greatest theme of poet and harpist was God. Hence, in the early history

of our Bible there came to toil at its pages men like Daniel and Isaiah and Ezekiel, who knew of nothing great in the world except the Great Jehovah. In poverty came all these men, rich only in their dreams of the King of kings. To them earth was remarkable not for its arts and sciences, but as being the temple of God.

Beneath the Christian's Book there stands a wonderful group of illustrious mortals. Pronounce the name of John, James, Paul, and then descend into the details of their lives. I can not now do it. The task were too long. But at all your steps in such a review you will come upon the varied manifestations of greatness. As in the tropic world, turn where the traveler may, new charms greet his sense, the charm of morning or evening, noonday or midnight, charm of colored birds or colored flowers, because there the gigantic sun works in unfettered liberty through long summers that have no destroying winter freezing the aroma from plants and the colors from flowers, so in the religious realm whence the Bible came, there was an unfettered belief in God and in Christ that lifted upward the Apostles' hearts and made them as full of divineness as the plants are full of aroma where the rich sunlight falls for ever and ever. Paul and John's heart

were steeped in religion like the white wools steeped in Tyrian purple. Those souls were golden all through and through. The world of fashion and riches and fame had disappeared and left them the world of religion.

But there is in those Bible worthies one element of greatness to which I have not yet alluded. It should come last because it should stand freshest in our memories and deepest in our love. Not simply were those Bible-makers from Moses to Paul all intellectually gifted, but they were almost sublime in the heroism of their conduct. We are all by nature worshipers of heroes. Heroism is the subjection of self to the interest of a multitude or of a principle. One of the largest and weakest qualities in man is his egotism. Egotism is an emotion that makes other people unimportant compared with self. It is the willingness that others should bear the burden of toil and of poverty, that others should die on the battle-field, that others should care for the poor and sit by the bedside of the dying. Egotism is the nomination and the election and coronation of self as king. Heroism is the opposite sentiment. By as much as the former is contemptible, the latter is sublime. As the world hates the one, it loves the other. We are all hero

worshipers by nature, just as by nature we love the beautiful of art. Heroism is indeed the beautiful in the soul. It is the old image of God coming to the surface again as when in scraping off a dingy wall in Florence the workmen came upon the portrait of Dante. Often there come men who throw aside the rags of self, the tattered vestments of beggars, and let out the image of God within. Into no institution of man, into no philosophy, into no school of art, has there entered such a band of heroes as is seen filing down into this book of God. It seems perfectly wonderful that each page of the Christian's book should have been composed by one of these children of heroism. The Bible is a Westminster Abbey where none but the great sleep.

There are two painful exceptions, David and Solomon. These are the only two characters of the sacred group that pass before us destitute of any beauty that need long detain us. David and Solomon are mighty ruins lying in the midst of the Bible. In them self was greater than society. Either one of them would rather overthrow all the laws of man than confess that self must have boundaries of passion or ambition. Rare in their mental endowments, able to compose a lofty psalm, or to write proverbs of matchless wisdom, they

descended again and again into the lowest condition of morals and left their thrones of gold stained with dishonor. But there may be a lesson in these ruins as valuable as the lesson of heroism that ornaments the remainder of the great book. The lesson may be particularly valuable in our age. It so happens that David and Solomon were the only ones of the sacred roll who held in their hands power and riches. They only possessed gold and sat upon thrones. All the other leaders in this book of thought stood forth only as common men. But here came two who held in their arms the world's empire and boundless longings. It is, therefore, a most impressive lesson of life, if of all the great names in this record, those rank the lowest who had found the most of riches and the most of power. Sitting down by those disgraced thrones and recalling the murder of Uriah, and the low sensuality of those once noble kings, the modern student may mark how riches and authority often destroy the high impulses of the soul, and transform into a tyrant and sensualist hearts that were once morally beautiful. In these two men a genius above that of the multitude was diverted from intellectual and moral paths and sent out into the haunts of reckless ambition and brutal vice. Had some so-called

calamity come and stripped David and Solomon of their riches and crowns, and sent them, like Isaiah, to find a home in the desert, they would have sought communion with truth and with God, and would have sunk to their tombs as the sun sinks in the West, not to be for ever quenched, but to shine on upon other times and shores. What, then, are riches but an eclipse of the soul?

Away from these two names, the soul comes to the front and maintains its divine rights in the lonely mountains with Moses and in the exile of St. John. No riches nor office came to divide the heart. Nothing remained to Moses, to Isaiah, to Paul, James, and John, but to serve God and man faithfully and then die and go to heaven. All through human history the mind and heart have evolved the most power only when most of the avenues of common pleasure and common pursuits have been closed, and when no gate has stood open but the gate of thought. When the banks are taken away from a river its waters spread out and the current ceases, and instead of an Amazon or a Danube we have only a marsh. The waters lose their clearness and their purity. So with mind. When, as in the history of the two Hebrew kings, all the restraining walls are taken away, the soul

loses purpose and power, and lies only a sluggish marsh. When, however, there are marked and iron-like banks within which the mind must run, then we have a soul that pours along, clear, and bright, and deep. Within a definite and beautiful channel moved all the heroism of the Old and New Testaments. It was a part of the Divine Providence (the whole of which we call inspiration), that gave these men their isolation, and through it their spiritual power. The poverty of the prophets, their half-wild life, their perfect concentration upon religion, were natural agencies that helped lift their souls up toward Deity. Their heroism was not that only of a soldier who dares the chance of battle, but it was also that of a philosopher who despises the pleasures and applause of the fashionable world. If you ask the wide world in all its high civilization, from old Babylon to Athens, and onward to London and Paris, wherein lies the success of man, that broad, flashing world will tell you, by actions if not by words, that riches, and feasting, and power, and palaces, and titles, and the beauty of woman, the hilarity of wine, the romance of song, make up the significance of human life. In such a many-colored light society has always moved along in its dance of life and death. To oppose this dazzling

scene, and live such a life as Paul lived, is a sort of heroism that reminds us of a shore beyond earth and of a race above man. To pass by such a magnificent scene as earth presents in its palaces, and gaze out into the abstract truth of religion, is a heroism like unto that of the soldier who bares his bosom that the truths of liberty may live after him. When we remember what doubts hang around the idea of God, and around the idea of Christ; what an uncertainty about the fact and quality of the future life,—an uncertainty that has followed the human heart in all times,—and then behold the Apostles giving up all else for this dream of eternity, forever parting with home and riches and honor and daily pleasures, it would seem that that is a dead heart which can look upon this Bible picture without tears.

Could all the worthies, from Isaiah to St. John, have drawn aside the veil of the future, and have seen what a mighty part in far-off nations their words were to play; could the prophet have heard the Christians of the nineteenth century reading his word picture of the Redeemer, and could St. John have seen millions in the coming America poring over his fourteenth chapter, they might easily have endured all possible sorrows in view of the harvest

in religion to wave on far-off shores. But before them lay the clouds that always shut off the future. They saw not the sublime reality. They walked in the solemnity of darkness, and as one by one they came to death, their mighty souls fed not upon sight, but upon the heroism of a lofty faith. As Washington's heart often sunk in the dark days of the Revolution, and as another President in our more recent trials often found the heavens dark above him and piteously prayed for help, so we know that at times the saints of the New Testament must have looked with sadness into each other's faces and have wondered whether just beyond the tomb Jesus would indeed come with His Paradise. And especially must these solemn thoughts have come crowding into the heart when upon the next day death was to come by the fagot or the axe. Death has always been a deep solemnity.

When we read the Bible remembering the quality of life these men lived and the quality of death they died, all criticism of words and phrases seems utterly childish, for their grand life was of itself an inspiration. To seek contradiction of little terms, or variation of narrative, or discord of incident, is like objecting to the effulgence of the sun on account of its spots. It is a law of criticism that no error of

grammar or of metaphor may weigh any thing against the writer who deals in powerful thought. As a false pronunciation or a rude syntax did not so much as mar the impetuous eloquence of a Patrick Henry or even a Henry Clay, all these infinitesimal things counting naught in the mighty current of the true and the good, so in these divine men of religion the errors of language, of time, of place, are in the midst of the high truths of the writers only as autumn leaves borne along by a river. The time will perhaps come when mankind will not look for inspiration in the geology or astronomy of the Bible, nor in the machine-like exactness of part to part, but will seek for it in that vast religion of time and eternity that lies in the sacred page like a continent upon the bosom of an ocean. The inspiration of a St. Paul or St. John lies not in the minute details of grammar or history, but in the Christian doctrine of life that flashes up from their souls like the columns of light streaming up from the northern horizon. When you, my friends, find your minds full of the critical, even the captious, spirit over the writings of these men, move a few paces away from your measuring-rules, and stand by the block where Paul is bowing to yield up his life, and hear him saying, "God forbid that I should glory save in the

cross of Christ," and the stillness and solemnity of the event, and the sublimity of the words, will make you recall all your objections, and wish that into your own heart might come such a presence of God. You will feel that inspiration is the transfiguration of a soul so that it reaches the true, the beautiful, and the good. A transfiguration not of the little, but of the great.

The heroes of the Bible make up such a group of pearls as never before in history were strung upon one string. Christianity is the only queen that ever wore such a collection of gems. But she wears them right along, and has thus been unapproachable for thousands of years. And she will remain matchless in the quality of soul that lay beneath her thought. It does not seem possible that earth can ever reproduce a St. Paul or a St. John. And now, when to these beings you have added just one more whom I need not so much as name; a Being who emptied an ocean of love and hope upon the world, and who has transformed the earth, making it roll out of darkness into light, you will conclude that here in the Christian records mighty souls have passed in a strange vision before us. Here are tremendous foundations, broad, deep, vast. And as though man might come some day in the vanity of the subse-

quent centuries and mock at the impulse or character of these men, they all died heroic deaths that the feeble critics of the nineteenth century might feel their own littleness when they should behold the thrilling ending of these lives. Paul was put to death in Rome. John was tortured and sent to die an exile. James was hurled from a battlement in Jerusalem and crushed to death. Simon Zelotes was put to death in Persia, where also Jude was tortured to the death. Matthew was slain by a mob in Abyssinia. Thomas was killed in Coromandel. Philip was hanged upon a pillar in Hierapolis. Andrew was crucified at Patraca, and James the Less in Asia. As for the one Name towering above all, He was crucified on Mount Calvary between two thieves. Into such holy hearts did God pour the truths, the hopes, the joys and sorrows of our religion.

A PLEA FOR THE BETTER CLASSES.

SERMON VIII.

A PLEA FOR THE BETTER CLASSES.

"Neither do men put new wine into old bottles."—*Matt.* 9:17.

ALL men are born to equal rights, but not to equal conditions. The outcome of life is so affected by health, by industry, by virtue, by laws, by natural ability, by accidental association, that society can never be made up of men living in uniform circumstances. As the bits of glass in the toy fall differently and make different forms, now a triangle and now an octagon, so the conditions of life fall out after a varied fashion, and place before us no two souls of one image. The Roman Church and the despotism of England transformed Ireland into an image of sorrow, and all her children are born into a sad career, in making which they had no voice. It is commonly rumored that some swift, secret couriers, stationed at relay points, rode and ran, and sailed, after the battle of Waterloo, and, reaching the stock market, laid the foundations of

the Rothschild fortune. Thus out of a riding horseman came a family that manages the money of a continent, and that continent Europe. Incidents thus may found a caste in society. Hence society is full of caste. Along comes a lad with more brains than is enjoyed by his brother, and while one Beethoven proudly signs himself "Land-owner," to keep the world from confounding him with his poor musical brother, the brother signs himself "Brain-owner," and the balance is fully struck. Thus out of the strange laboratory of nature issue two tribes, "land-owners," and "brain-owners," and then a third tribe that are neither. Very busy is this earth, all the while dividing its children up into parcels, saying to some of them "Take beauty;" to others, "Take genius;" to others, "Take money and go your way;" and by divers paths, they all go away to the far country. In one of his poems Dr. Holmes passes beyond the visible influence of earth and finds a fatal hand reaching down out of the unseen and shaping destiny.

> From the same father's side,
> From the same mother's knee,
> One journeys toward a frozen tide,
> One to a peaceful sea.

This verse, quoted only from vague memory,

reminds us that unknown causes enter into the career of man, and, combining with known agencies, make earth a place where humanity falls into many shapes, and beats around against itself like the waves of chopped seas. As the world advances, as the unifying power of education and republicanism advances and increases, the distinctions of society will not only diminish in quantity, but the quality will be less painful. The prayer of the Saviour, "That all may be one," is an ideal toward which all are to toil, but which will be fully overtaken only in the fields of Heaven.

Here, then, the world lies to-day with different classes upon its surface, and even here in democratic America stand two classes side by side, the educated and the untaught. We need not recall the rich and the poor, the beautiful and the ugly, the high and the low by the verdict of gold, but only those two armies called the learned and the unlearned, for our remarks have reference only to those two multitudes. A hundred times at least in my life have I spoken on behalf of the slave in the cotton-field, the Indian in the forest, the masses in India and China, and the swarms of wretched ones in our streets. Hence you will grant me a swift forgiveness to-day if for once I shall enter a plea in behalf of people who, gifted

with good sense by fate, have, by reading, and hearing, and reflection, added a little to the original moral momentum of their souls. This multitude is not large, but it is immensely powerful, and this multitude is daily expanding, and their power for good or ill upon a rapid increase.

Each class of mankind needs its own peculiar treatment. When a new form of human soul comes along, a new school-house, new politics, a new religion, must be made for this new soul. The laws of Persia would not be obeyed by Americans. Our upper classes would not tend a Roman theater. Our soldiers would not go into battle as the Persians went, with a driver and a lash behind each squad. As fast as new men come, their surroundings must become new, just as Paul, when a child saw as a child and spoke as a child, but passing into manhood he put away childish things. While a child, Paul saw the sky as a blue arch within a stone's throw of his hand, but when he became a man his mind pushed back the canopy and made it the far-off encampment of God. Thus, as a class of men or a whole age moves forward, the scenery changes as around a flying train, and what was passes away. Thus the Roman religion, with its temples, and candles, and holy coats, and with its pageants of

marching priests with gorgeous robes, fitted well the wants of an age when Roman, and Goth, and Vandal, were to be carried across from barbarism to civilization. As a child learns language first through the eye, by seeing the object represented by the word, and, indeed, as language itself began in the names of things that had length, breadth, and thickness, so Christianity passes through its materialized period with the individual or the age, and then swells out into spirituality, as the man or the time changes its need.

Since, then, Christianity must be flexible in its method and doctrine, we all err perhaps in overlooking the upper, educated class and in devoting our whole time to the effort to fit religion to the great democratic populace. The genius of our country turns the attention of publicists (and the preacher too is a publicist) toward what is called the masses. The uprising of charity as a virtue makes us seek out the object of that great love. It has come to pass that we weep over nothing but a ragged orphan or a slave. The pulpit upbraids the rich, and defies the educated, and ridicules the scientific, and frantically declares for the outcast, the ignorant, the chimney-sweep, and the newsboy. It is not probable that the Church will overdo any

shape of benevolence. We would not abate its work or its prayer along any of these divine paths. But let us not forget that there is another class of human beings, educated, moral, often rich, and always powerful, who need some thought and some love from those who pretend to be carrying the ark of the Lord along through the wilderness. If any one will look into the churches of the land of a Sunday he will find a wonderful scarcity of the intellectually great. But, if the same observer will visit the mission Sunday-schools, or will go to the meetings of the great evangelists toiling over the world, he will find throngs of what the world calls the middle or humbler class. This comes to pass because the religion of the day has been all shaped to suit them. There is a wonderful attractiveness to the multitude in some of the modern forms of evangelism. The month upon month of meetings, the simple exposition of simple passages of scripture, the thousands of anonymous requests for prayer, the wandering about of "Holiness Bands," composed of persons who have given up all for the Master, are religious phenonema that meet the need of many. At least let us suppose that some good is about to flow down from such fountains. But meanwhile what is the Church

doing for that multitude of persons who need a Christianity of a different shape? There are thousands who have become dissatisfied with the Adventists and with the "Holiness Bands," and with the domestic economy that prays for money and a barrel of flour, that supports life by prayer instead of by industry. There is a mighty throng of statesmen, of lawyers, of doctors, of scientific men, of readers and thinkers, who have quite deserted the church of the age, a throng mighty in their power over not only the present, but over the future.

Not in the least should the zeal of the pulpit be abated toward the lower multitude, but toward the educated class it is high time there were flung out some kind of invitation that might touch their intellects and their very souls.

It is very difficult indeed to state what should be done in this great crisis of religious affairs. It can not be denied that while upon one side a multitude is seen coming toward the sanctuary, a large and valuable company may be seen on the other side going away. This picture, to me at least, is so plainly seen that it assures me that the Church has come to a crisis. In such an hour many should speak, that by the mouth of many witnesses the

truth may be established. I can submit only my own reflections.

1. It is evident that only the least possible concession should ever be made to the humblest classes. As they should not be treated to poor music and a spectacular drama because they are unable to appreciate good music and the high histrionic art, so religion should never bend much downward, but should stand calm and divine upon its lofty mountain, and entice the multitude upward. It is marvelous how soon a crowd will rise to the level of its leader. Moses dashed to pieces the golden calf, and steadfastly lifted up the true God. In a few years the Israelites arose from the idol to the living Jehovah. There is a limit to the usefulness of the law of accommodation. There is a law of ideals which makes it necessary that each individual and each group of individuals should be held by the vision of something above self. In the career of Christianity only those leaders can conduct the Church to success who are able, and who are brave enough to stand above the people and to invite them to higher seats. The idea of a miraculous call into the ministry has let loose into the world hundreds of teachers who, instead of leading the people upward, have helped them back toward a

superstition that would almost shame a monk of the dark ages. Many are now preaching what they call the Gospel, who possess only a highly-wrought emotional nature, and an extreme ignorance of the history and principles of religion. If the Church could realize that the only call to the ministry possible to be heard on earth is made up of common sense, learning, and piety, all joining into one invitation, great and substantial would be the religious progress of the land in the next generation. But as things now are, there are hundreds of agents busy in reducing Christianity down to the condition of a weak superstition.

2. There should be every where confessed and promulgated a reform of doctrine. There are many noble men now carrying in their bosoms religious, even Christian, sentiments, who are still told that these feelings are not religion, but are only deceptive states of mind, blinding those who hold them to their utter depravity; that by some new and strange manner (perhaps at some public meeting in the middle of Winter), these persons must become converted. Now I believe man's heart is changed by the Infinite Spirit, but I believe the Church has long erred by daring to decide upon the manner by which, or the person to whom, such new life comes. It should

seem that the Church can wait only for the moral life, and finding in the soul the fear of God and a love toward Christ, must assume that there the transforming power of God has been. A *righteous* man must be confessed to be a *converted* man. The Church possesses no analysis by which it can open a heart and find that morality is not regeneration, and that the prayers and hymns of a "moralist" do not issue from the Holy Spirit, who, imaged as a dove, flies back and forth forever over the ocean of soul. There are hundreds of men in this city and every where, who, loving the New Testament, and bowing in reverence before its central character, and living an upright life, are yet viewed as heirs of perdition, because they have not passed through an "experience" defined by mistaken fathers, who seemed to be able to analyze the workings of the spirit both of man and of God. In closing its doors against "mere moralists," in waiting for only those who should come through the gate of miracle, though the tumult of an "experience," the Church has shut out a large upper class, and has not only deprived itself of power, but has done an injustice toward some of the noblest members of society. The presence of the religious sentiment and an upright life are the only evidences of conversion we

dare expect. Hence we of the Church should always hail every upright, religious man as a brother, not simply by language, or country, or by humanity, but a brother by the sweet association of religion. In the former centuries it was well enough to combine inseparably salvation and forms, salvation and baptism, or salvation and a church, or salvation and a certain "experience," for then all were ready to believe any thing, and the more ceremony there was the more welcome the religion. Even such a proud and lofty king as Louis XIV., said in his dying moments, "I have done whatever my Church has told me to do. I know nothing of Christian duty except as directed by my bishops. If I have done wrong the blame rests upon them." In all former times it mattered not if Heaven and trifling forms were bound together. But in our age there has come to the surface a new class of persons. Issuing from a new world of literature, of developed reason, of deep, sober reflection, they demanded a Christianity purified. They will not, like Louis XIV., say, "I have done whatever my priest has told me to do;" but, cutting loose from these human masters, and passing out into the new world of light and liberty, they will place their hand upon their heart, and, looking up to God, say, "What wouldst *Thou*

have me to do?" These great children of earth will no longer suffer you and me to define conversion for them, nor to philosophize for them about free-will or decrees, nor about "baptismal regeneration," but, standing in the presence of an Infinite God, and in the more visible presence of Jesus Christ, they will push away all our little vestments, and candles, and formulas, and will, with sublime power, say with the Saviour, "Blessed are the pure in heart." The time is rapidly coming when none of us will dare contradict such a profession of religion. The government of our land, the church of our land, the homes of our land, will be compelled at last to seek shelter in an upper multitude whose conscience, and culture, and doctrine, of an upright life shall become the best anchor of society. A cultivated gentleman remarked to me recently, "When you draw up a creed for your 'Central Church' I hope you will make righteousness a very prominent doctrine."

But we can not delay longer upon this point. Let me repeat that Christianity must study anew the times, and, if possible, must confess the *upright* man to be the *converted* man, and must gather into its sanctuary thousands whose religion has been simplified by the generations of reflection that have separated the true from the false, and the valuable from the foolish and the incidental.

3. The educated class demand a modification of the popular religion to this extent, that it must be made to meet the wants of this life. As men progress in education and thought, earth with all its interests becomes larger instead of smaller. The "ever unrolling web of life" expanding out into youth, manhood, womanhood, into homes by the hillside, into cities by the lake and sea, into nations covering continents, into vast literatures and arts, grows more wonderful as the human mind gathers power to grasp the great spectacle. Had we all ten times the power to perceive the greatness of our world, we should weep to-day over the sublimity of this great wave of human life. To us so far away from the planet Jupiter it twinkles only as a large dew-drop. But could we be carried to within a few miles of its shores we should be filled with amazement at the gigantic world into which that twinkling star should expand. Perhaps to our eye would come the vision of fields.

> Where everlasting Spring abides,
> And never fading flowers,

and to our ear would come, as to the Italian poet in paradise, "the rolling melody of bird-song." Thus, could our minds be so aroused by some divine inspiration that they might draw near this flowing

stream of earthly life and see it in all its wonder of to-day and to-morrow, our hearts would almost break in presence of the scene. A public man recently wrote to a friend, "Oh, that I had been born twenty-five years sooner or twenty-five years later, that either I might have died before this generation had come, or else that now I might hope to go with it onward to its greater hours."

Thus, as the mind advances, the proportions of this life increase, and that which was a twinkling dew-drop to childhood becomes to the higher intellect a marvelous world bearing an Infinite God and an unfathomable humanity on its great bosom.

Now, up to the very present the popular religion has too much taught the multitude to sever all the ties of earth and wait for Heaven to come. This suits the slave, for he longs to escape bondage; and suits the poor, for to him Heaven is riches. The religion of the humbler classes is always a melancholy. Their hymns are wails of desolation; their sermons a philosophy not of life but of death. The time has come for a new phase of Christianity. We need no longer, and never did need, the fanatical teachings that declare the world about to end, and that nothing human can ever carry mankind forward to good government, and good homes, and high

personal character. Those who have dared teach such a doctrine have only separated those who loved God and the Christ from the sacred interests of earth; have made them treat with contempt the polls where the votes are cast which shape the destiny of the state; made them despise the men who make laws and study justice; made them treat with disdain the arts that refine, the literature that enlightens, the pleasures that cheer. Among the doctrines to be discarded let us rank first all this Adventism. There are tens of thousands of Christians who have taken no part in this world's stupendous business, but while their fellow men have been toiling amid the duties and the sorrows of society, they have consulted the ambiguous words of poetry to find whether or not this is the year when the earth is to pass away in whirlwind, cloud, and fire. It will answer for the poor African to feel that earth is not his dwelling-place. He may sing a song woven out of the chains that once held him and his children,

> Oh, swing low, sweet chariot,
> Oh, leave me not behind;

for to him death is a chariot passing over a flowery road drawn by horses of light. And so out

of the persecutions and desolations of the former centuries, where a million people went hungry and barefoot that one king or one prince might be arrayed in splendor; out of the persecutions that made religion mean martyrdom,—came a melancholy which we pity and forgive. But here our charity terminates, and now we behold a period when a new world lying before the Church asks it to put aside its indifference and gird itself for the welfare of this great encampment on the shores of time. The lawyers, the statesmen, the patriots, the philanthropists, all demand a religion that shall blend with these days of earth, and help it in its liberty, in its law, in its arts, its letters, its honors, its pleasures. These noble ones believe in immortality, but they believe that a good earth is the best stepping stone to Heaven. They believe God loved earth, or He would not have made it and have caused to pass over it such a procession of souls. They believe that the children of this world will be called one by one to eternity, but they believe that for thousands of years yet earth will remain the arena of human life, and that as a mother lovingly provides for her children, though she may be on the morrow to leave them forever, so all noble souls will toil for mankind present and to come,

though there be a grave for the toiler near by in the grass. Here upon earth God is sitting upon a throne of ages, and by our deeds done here we weave for ourselves the chaplets of immortality. Hence, man demands a religion that shall be full of faithfulness to these years, a religion which utters to earth the poet's words, with high adaptation:

"Oh, grand world, being about to die, we salute thee."

Morituri salutamus,

"Ye halls in whose seclusion and repose,
Phantoms of fame like exhalations rose
And vanished, we who are about to die
Salute you; earth, and air, and sea, and sky,
And the Imperial Sun that scatters down
His sovereign splendor upon grove and town."

Thus, must the Christianity of our day refit itself to the new era. It can count no longer upon a childhood that loves forms, nor upon a public ignorance that drinks in all doctrines. It should not remain neglectful of the fact that there is rising up a class powerful in education and in reason and in virtue, a class that does not fill our jails, but that makes our laws, that sits upon the judge's bench, that shapes our literature, that molds our social life, a class which neither clergyman nor

theologian will dare pass by in his effort to plant Christ in the human soul. To them Christianity must come in a wonderful simplicity, in all the moral splendor of Jesus Christ; come chanting the beatitudes; come not longing, like the African, to escape earth, but come with the impulse of heroes loving the education of duty done, and feeling that the best immortality is that which springs up out of the most honorable tomb. The best resurrection awaits him who dies, not as a worm, but as a hero.

THE BIBLE AND THE COMMON PEOPLE.

SERMON IX.

THE BIBLE AND THE COMMON PEOPLE.

"The entrance of Thy Word giveth light."—*Psalms* 119:130.

THE Sunday having come upon which this congregation has been accustomed to contribute toward a wider circulation of the Bible, my remarks this morning will be upon "The Bible and the Humbler Classes." The Bible Society does not pretend to exhaust its money and solicitude upon those who stand high in either riches or education. Its work is among the lowly, and hence we may well inquire into the relations of the Book to the people. This Church has, in that ten years of its life known to me, shown a deep interest in this branch of Christian beneficence, and may I not hope that its last contribution under this pastorate may be marked by the old generosity and by the old faith in the Book of books?

Inasmuch as the Bible is destined soon to be omitted from the list of books taught in the public

schools, the work of disseminating the truths of the Scriptures will soon devolve wholly upon the Church, and this fact will make the Bible Society a greater instrument of good in the future than it has ever been in the past. We can not hope much from any compulsory reading of morals. While the Bible held its place in the schools by power of conscience, or by a cheerful public consent, all was well. Its lessons fell on good ground like seed sown upon rich soil in the sunshine of Spring. When these divine lessons at last need the strong arm of law, and of doubtful or unjust law, to sustain them in public schools, then they cease to fall upon the heart as dew from Heaven, but come to the ear more as orders from a powerful despot whose potency is to be found in the police. In a New England village, two weeks ago, in a school where half were Catholic and half were Protestant children, the village schoolmaster and village priest fell to fighting in the school room as to the reading or the not reading of the Sermon on the Mount.

It is said that much of German infidelity has come from an enforced religion. Compulsory Bibles and compulsory prayers have never proven a valuable element in the spread of religion. Much less can they prove valuable in a land whose great

motto is liberty, and of which liberty religious freedom is a most conspicuous part. An enforced reading of the Bible would only make its pages absolutely hateful to Catholic and Jew and skeptic, and thus as legal power should come to the support of the book, its intrinsic moral power would pass away. For many reasons the Bible will be withdrawn from the public schools as rapidly as any religious opposition may demand such a withdrawal, and in a few years the Church will remain the chief moral hope of the country.

Religion, from its very nature, must work its way forward only by love. Its power lies not in legislatures, but in persuasion, and the more gently the Bible comes to people's homes and to the children, the more divine will the book appear.

Among the peaceful agents in the instruction of the humbler classes we must to-day mention the American Bible Society. The society is composed of all the denominations of Protestants, and it distributes the book without note or comment. There is in such a society something broad that ought to captivate the heart of this congregation that glories in broadness, and that cordially hates the fog that hangs over the low coast of religious sectarianism.

1. Permit me to remind you, first, that the coldness toward the Scriptures now existing in the world is limited to certain classes. There are thousands of scientific minds who have been led by their studies to feel that there is a discord between the Book of Revelation and the Book of Nature. In this dilemma they cling to their idol, nature, and look with contempt upon the book of paper and ink. Not being able to serve two masters, and assuming that the masters disagree, they naturally confess their allegiance to the world of hill and vale, and ocean and rock, and air and light; and neglect the world of St. John, and St. Paul, and Magdalen, and Christ. What causes may have led to this defection on the part of science we can not here inquire. We may accept of the defection as a fact, as a temporary fact, and thus pass it by.

2. There is a second sedition or rebellion existing among the more highly educated, be they scientific, or metaphysical, or philosophic, or simply well-informed minds. This rebellion against the Bible is very extensive, and is, perhaps, somewhat on the increase. It has come in its wide and sad extent not from any fault of the Scriptures themselves, but from the bad company the Bible has been compelled to keep in its journey along through the generations.

Not only is a man known by the company he keeps, but all things and all men are exposed to the good or ill of association. God alone can look through incidents or accidents and see the intrinsic worth beyond. The human mind can not penetrate the universe, but it must look at the externals and there locate its love or hate. The New Testament has been compelled to keep some very bad company in its day. It had to live awhile with Augustine, who was as much Pagan as Christian, and who was as obscure as midnight. It suffered from partnership with Tertullian, and then from the long dark ages which taught all the follies possible to human imagination, and quoted God's word in their support; and then from even Luther and Calvin, who added as much of the false and the terrible to the Bible as they drew from it of the true and beautiful. Thus all the way of its march the divine book has suffered from the badness of the company it has kept. At best the Bible would have had a difficult task, that of winning the love of wicked hearts. Under more favorable circumstances it would have met with many an enemy; but when, to the natural unpopularity of a book that commands virtue one adds the cruelties of conduct and the monstrosities of doctrine which the olden time deduced from the Testaments,

it is scarcely to be wondered at that a widespread doubt came into the world whether such a volume ever came from the wise or merciful One. God's Bible and man's Bible are very different books.

3. Having thus confessed the existence of two large classes of skeptics, classes that may be called the scientific and the moral skeptics, let us now mark a more cheering fact, namely, that there is a vast multitude of persons to whom these clouds of doubt and storms of wrath have not come. There are millions of good citizens living in good quiet homes, leading industrious and often sorrowful lives, to whom the Bible comes in that moral beauty which it wore when the world was young.

We can not but assume that the modern revolt against the Bible is unjust. It results from an imaginary antagonism between science and religion, and from the unwillingness of men to distinguish between the Roman Church and the simple Church of Christ, or between the Institutes of Calvin and the four Gospels. I believe this rebellion is so badly founded that it will soon pass away. Having this feeling, may we not rejoice that there are millions in this land who have not yet come to this scientific or intellectual doubt, and to whom the Bible comes as a blessed volume from God to man? Perhaps by

the time this throng of common people shall have reached a higher intellectual condition, the present public unbelief will have passed away, and a harmony will have been found between learning and the Christian faith. Such a harmony will come. The Bible may be a closed book to many modern philosophers and casuists, but to the multitude at large it lies an open book, with a light better than than that of the sun upon its page. In fact, in order to learn the value of the Bible, we must repair to the multitude, for they make up that vast audience to whom its words were spoken, and they make up a jury that interprets the Word without prejudice. If the Bible had been composed for the highest order of purely intellectual men, then they would be indeed the only commentators we should dare consult. In seeking for the meaning of Puffendorff, we may willingly consult all the learned moralists, and one may well read a learned commentator upon a learned Blackstone; but when one comes to read letters from his mother or his friend, or the poems of Cowper or Burns, he may dispense with Augustine and Calvin, and may go to the writings in his own mind and soul. The Bible is God's word to the people, and the average truth and impulse which the people secure from that book will be the

only truth worthy of being called a Biblical creed. As the modern commentators upon Shakspeare are loading that bard down with ideas of which his brain never dreamed, and are now making that great poet a wareroom into which all kinds of specialists are emptying their loads of discovery, and invention, and plunder, so the long line of theologians have made the Bible the helpless victim of all their marvelous theories and fabrications. Upon the Bible the high churchman hangs his vestments and sets his candles. There the Catholic finds his pope and his hloy water. There the schoolmen found the bases of their debates about the size and weight of angels. There the old students found fifty confessions of faith. There Luther found the nothingness of man's free agency. There Calvin found his five points and the death warrant of Servetus; and there, in a word, the world's wise men have found all imaginable notions from the damnation of an infant to the hanging of a witch.

Frederick the Great is reported to have said that if he had a province which he wished to punish for disloyalty, he would suffer it to be governed a few years by some abstract philosophers. We do not know why one may not apply this anecdote more widely, and declare that if the world wishes to get

wholly clear of its Bible it should leave it a little longer to the tender mercy of the theologians. It is evidence of the divineness of the book that it has survived the ravages of all these ancient and modern schoolmen.

With the great public heart for its interpreter, that book stands to-day all glorious in its kindness and light. The common people come to it not with their elaborate systems, but with their sins that need forgiveness, and their sorrows that need a cure. The theoretic scholars approach the Bible as critics, desiring to build up a theory or tear down one, and the skeptical world at large reads it only as a lawyer weighs evidence; but what we call the humbler classes, scattered all through the wide land, living here in a cabin, there in a cottage, or acting as servants of the rich, or sailing in ships upon the sea, or swinging the axe in the forest, come to the Book at times because the issues of life and death are there. By the time this numerous multitude shall have reached a higher intellectual development, the present form of skepticism will have passed away, perhaps, and there will be thousands of citizens who will never have suffered from its blight. The basis of doubt is always changing. Unbelief attaches itself now to scientific inquiry, now to

historical research, now to internal defects of morals; the stream is always changing its bed like the Mississippi, leaving dry to-day the shore against which it was pouring a flood on yesterday. Back of this changing criticism the great book re-appears again, not only not injured, but improved, and the common people will find the Scriptures richer and better at last, without themselves having passed through the furnace by which the Word became purified. It is a comforting thought that there are thousands in the land who are reading the Bible away from the scientific and theological confusion of tongues.

To the multitude the sacred volume tells a straight-forward story. They see in it the picture of the human heart in all its sinfulness and in all its divineness, too. They see the dark destiny of sin, and the bright destiny of virtue. One is called hell, the other heaven. They do not descend into particulars about the region of sorrow or the region of joy. They feel that the one is to be dreaded, the other loved. There on the open page lies the doctrine of repentance, far more impressive in Peter and in Magdalen than in any system of abstract doctrine. There lies the doctrine of faith in Christ sweeter in the group around Jesus, in the apostles

and martyrs, than in any confession of any Church. There in the Gospels lives and moves and dies and rises again the Redeemer, in a charm and power to which the learning of commentators can add nothing. In fact, one may perhaps be glad that there is an army of earth's inhabitants, old and young, white and black, hidden away in the obscurity which ignorance and poverty bring, to whom human wisdom in the form of "eternally begotten," and "eternally proceeding," and "limited atonement," and "inability," has never come, but to whose hearts the Bible tells its simple story as a mother talks to her confiding child. When learning so mistakes its calling and becomes only the overgrown egotism of vain hearts, then ignorance is bliss. Much of modern theology is only great banks of cloud rolling up between the human family and the moral sun. As the damp vales of earth and the bitter ocean are always exhaling vapors that keep our sky clouded and that expose the beautiful earth to perpetual storm, so from the intellect, in its extravagant vanity, clouds arise that hide both Creator and Saviour from the upturned faces of mankind. Upon Goat Island in the Niagara, upon a Sunday, years ago, I found, hidden away at the root of a tree, a servant from the hotel, reading in his Testament

about the crucifixion. He was an old emancipated slave. Upon being questioned as to whether he loved that passage above all, he said he always cried over the idea that for even black men a Christ should have died. I wonder whether any of the formulas of men about that death could ever entice from a slave's heart such a tribute of weeping. Here a humble fugitive slave came to fulfill the image of Tennyson:

> All subtile thought, all curious fears,
> Borne down by gladness so complete,
> He bows, he bathes the Saviour's feet
> With costly spikenard and with tears.

Thus, doubt it not, the common people glean from the sacred page the very golden sheaves which the Lord let fall for man. They find them in all the wide field reaching from Abraham to St. John. Not the entire multitude will thus be found extracting honey from this great field of flowers. Man will never move in a solid phalanx toward any form of good. Many are called but few are chosen. The downward path is always broad, the upward path narrow. *Facilis descensus averni.* Hence, when I speak of the blessings which the common people draw from the Bible I am not dreaming of an unbroken host poring over a divine book, but of

many souls, many indeed, which in youth and in old age, in joy and in sorrow, in darkness and in light, are at times taking up the Bible to trace in it the path of hope for time and eternity. Could you call all these together this day from all the corners of our land, and from the lonely ships on our seas, they would come in such a mnltitude, and so pressing the Book to their hearts, that even were you an infidel you would bless God that so many souls were drawing so much happiness from the two Testaments. The hardest heart might weep for joy that so many had found infinite peace.

It is wonderful (at least to myself) what use the unlearned make even of the enigmatical pages of Isaiah and Ezekiel and the Apocalypse of St. John. In the humble house of the freeman and the slave you will find the Bible soiled and worn where Ezekiel parades his images of the Almighty, and where John paints the catastrophe of earth. What means this, that the children of ignorance are drawing nourishment from pages from which the calmer minds of both the skeptical and the faithful have often turned silently away? It must mean that true religion is an emotion of the soul rather than a clear action of the intellect. Religion is an uprising of the heart. A religious newspaper of this city

which two years ago exhausted all its columns each week against an "emotional religion," did last week so far forget itself as to state that "Around the Mercy Seat the heart always rises above the mists of the head," and over some Unitarian hymns it expressed the hope that "May there be more of this rising above the narrow house of the intellect toward the Son of Righteousness." Religion, worship, prayer, is a deep feeling rolling over the heart, as a wave upon the shore. Hence, amid the indefinite ideas of Ezekiel and St. John the intellect indeed does not see clearly, but the soul is borne along by its own consciousness of the grand and even the thrilling in religion. Mathematics alone speaks exact words. Poetry and prophecy come with a wonderful vagueness, but the human heart flies to them because it is not information it seeks, but a new light or shadow for the heart. No one may declare what Ezekiel saw in his vision of an advancing Providence moving upon wheels within wheels and with wings of cherubim, but toward the scene the human spirit turns and feels that somewhere in the great cloud of mystery is the being of God. So neither the learned nor the unlearned know what definite ideas lay in the mind of John when he wrote out his great dream, but yet the poor and the

humble repair to his page because as they read it the great mystery of immortality springs up afresh in their hearts, and to their ears comes the voice of harpers harping upon harps, and through their spirits roll the thunders of eternity. Music is not the only indefinite art. Music is almost matchless in its power to awaken the slumbering feelings of the soul. It has no definite language. The same piece will carry new life to one and will seem like a dance of happy spirits, and to another will come as in the pensiveness of a dying hour, and will cause to come before us the faces of the loved dead, and will make one wish to be with the dead beyond the tomb in the grass. Music is an urn into which each heart empties its own self. But it is not alone in this. Religion is its sister, only more gifted in mind and soul. Hence, into the words of St. John, into his graceful vases of language the heart of the humblest man may go and pour its own hopes and sorrows, and while yet upon the shores of earth in body may be carried away to paradise. The Apocalypse is only the solemn music of futurity sounding for us all. The words are indistinct, but we remember now that the most impressive music is written wholly without words, leaving the soul to wander off into realms where no language has ever

gone. In the best hours of the soul language becomes vague or else wholly perishes.

Let me conclude by re-stating the thought that the Bible Society may, if it will rise to its work, reach a multitude to which the chilling unbelief of our day has not yet come; that this multitude, living now in obscurity, will come forward and be the children of a deeper faith when we children of doubt shall have become dust; and this multitude can gather from the Bible itself a better idea of Jesus Christ and of the whole way of life than they can gather from the elaborate systems of man; and that before their strangely-made hearts, hearts full of responsive religion, even the prophecies and the Apocalypse turn into prayers, and fears, and longings, and hopes, lifting their spirits upward as by a melody written sublimely, but without words.

CHRISTIAN HEROISM.

SERMON X.

CHRISTIAN HEROISM.

"Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations."—*Matt.* 28:19.

THE approaching meeting of the American Board, a meeting which honors always the city where its sessions are held, should, for the week, at least, make the subject of missions a theme of reflection. We are all by nature sluggish of intellect. The easiest path is the favorite. Idleness is one of the shapes assumed by our original sin. To think correctly is not the only act that depends upon long effort, but to be willing to think at all, is a state of mind that comes by civilization, and not by nature. When a man has become so willing to think that he will not dismiss with a shudder any of the great or minor questions of the day, he has made no little progress away from the degradation of Adam's fall. All public speakers have at times seen the hearts of their audiences sink when the theme of remark has been announced, all the

multitude in the seats feeling that they could not endure to climb such a hill of dead argument as lay before them. But this sinking, this fainting of the soul in presence of mental work, is not the result of human greatness, but human littleness, it being the struggle of the old "natural man" to find still in the nineteenth century the sleep and languor which so delighted him when the world was young and the day and night were not vexed by any logic or any art. It will require in us all great effort and great will-power to enable us to study betimes the varied phenomena of man's life. As merchants we are willing to study man's commerce at home and abroad; as doctors we are willing to read the medical journals of the old and new worlds; as politicians we are ready to mark what the papers said yesterday, and what this or that caucus did East or West; as ladies of fashion all are willing to study the latest forms of raiment, and to combine desire with the study; but to get out of these channels, and while merchants to care for law, or while doctors to care for theology, or while lawyers to give any thought to a missionary, this is the crucial test which few can survive. It should be the deliberate and stubborn purpose of each mind to free itself from the infatuation of a hobby, and

to stand forth in the breadth of the world. Like the ancient accused of a selfishness, we should reply, "I am human, and no human interest is beyond the range of my heart."

The greatness of earth is many-sided. Be your own calling great indeed, law or science, or art or merchandise, the world is immensely large outside your calling, and it would be sad should you die without having seen something of that vast beyond. It has been thought the calamity of Moses that he was not permitted to pass over into the better land; but there are millions in our day who can show a sadder record, for instead of rising to the top of Pisgah and stealing a sweet prospect of the widening world, they remain at the mountain's base and die without even a glimpse of "the sweet fields arrayed in living green." The tears of pity shed for Moses would well be distributed over the crowd that does not enjoy even a Pisgah view of far-off things.

Assuming, therefore, that we should struggle to get away from the narrowness that cares for only one thing, and from the inclination of barbarism to pass life in sleep, let us confess that the missionary movements of the Christian era are a fact that demands the attention of student and ordinary

citizen and philanthropist. A material age will daily invite us away from such lines of reflection. It asks us to study the strata in the ground and the stars in the sky; asks us to find the shores of old lakes and the craters of extinct volcanoes; asks us to gather the bones of fossil birds and fish, and store up a cabinet of shells out of which some worms died a million years ago; but it heeds little the men that have sailed all stormy seas to carry love and light to their fellow pilgrims in this vale. Science is often full of cruelty. It studies the little things of the universe, counts the birds and the trees, measures the footprints of the great mammals that beat around in the forests that afterward made our coal, weighs the fossil tusks and teeth of extinct mastodons, but looks coldly toward the ship that carried St. Paul about, and toward the block where the blood was drawn from his heart. To science the bark canoe and the stone tomahawk of the savage are things greater and more charming than the pleading at Mars Hill or the movements of the apostles.

All the facts of the earth are impressive and valuable, and at the feet of natural science we may all cast garlands of good will, but it is with ideas as Paul says it is with bodies: there are ideas

terrestrial and ideas celestial, and the glory of the terrestrial is one and the glory of the celestial is another. There is one kind of flesh of man, another flesh of beasts, another of birds; and so there is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon. In the realm of ideas there is a glory on all sides, a beautiful, captivating glory; but the glory of the birds and the fishes is one, and the glory of a Xavier, or a Duff, or a Judson is another. Dear to us all, both as a study and as an inspiration, should be the lives of men who helped Christianity and all our civilization when it lay helpless in the midst of savages. When the storm may have occurred that changed the old ocean into prairies, or which transformed forests into beds of coal, is a question interesting indeed, but not so vital, so sublime, as the study of that awful tempest of destruction and creation that gave us Christ and His ardent followers. The penitence of Magdalen, the self-denial of the poor widow, the kindness of St. John, are stories that have affected the human race more than it has been affected by botany, chemistry, and astronomy. As of all things upon earth the soul is the greatest, as "there is nothing great in the world but man, and nothing great in man but his soul," according to the confession of Sir William

Hamilton, hence there can be no study higher than the reflection over the atmosphere in which the soul lives and advances in its marvelous career. To look out in the evening toward the West and see the saffron ether poured out of invisible urns, is only one-half as sublime an act of the spirit as the retrospect of the heart that looks back and sees that atmosphere of human love and truth that rolled down upon the world from the great hearts of Jesus and His missionary children. As when the ministering priest at the altar used, in Aaron's day, to wave the burning censer until the colored smoke and the delicious perfume filled the whole temple, and from the fretted windows floated out toward Heaven, so Paul, and Peter, and James, and John, standing afar off at the holy altar, have swung their lighted vessels to and fro, until we, in this remote century, are enveloped by the pillar of cloud and fire, and to-day breathe in the sweet-scented air.

St. Paul, Xavier, Judson! These three names will stand for a class, and from one we may learn all. (*Ab uno disce omnes.*) The splendor of learning and the temptations of office and fame counted nothing to Paul's arithmetic after he met the great Christ. After that meeting at the gates of Damas-

cus, Paul, like William Hamilton, saw nothing valuable upon earth but man, and nothing great in man but his soul. Paul passed from the career of a harsh ruler, or rather brutal underling, over to that unbounded charity that pities all, and loves all, and helps all. The Jewish nation was too limited to satisfy his love. He became the apostle to the Gentiles because the Jews were only a little sect. The Gentiles were a great world, hundreds of millions strong. Paul is the first being in history, after Jesus Christ, that took into his love the human race. The rest of the human history is uncheered by any instance of a self-denial that had all man for its object. Some of the Greeks wrote about the oneness of man, and one of them boasted that he was a "citizen of the world." But the theory of nobleness found its earliest realization in Judea. The Greeks loved their own state to such a degree that citizens thought it a matter of reproach to visit any outside land. To the polite Athenian foreign travel was a disgrace, unless the journey were made on some business account. To go abroad was to confess the imperfection of home. That magnificent breadth of brain and affection that grasps a whole human race, bond and free, high and low, is first seen in the great missionary to the Gentiles. All

the elements of human greatness were visible in Paul. The insignificance of his body and whole presence perhaps made him concentrate, even from boyhood, upon the work of mental development. The gates of fashionable life and pleasure were closed, and hence the greater flow of life through the gates of the spirit. When a man stood up in the physique and health of an Apollo, the games, the general pride of life, came into daily conflict with great mental progress and with the highest ends of being. Nature compelled Paul to pursue an intellectual life, for it closed against him the voices of pleasure and the flattery of society. His thorn was not in the flesh, but his whole body was a thorn in the soul. The body is generally the decoration of the mind: his was the mind's mortification. At last Paul must have been a rare spectacle of soul standing upon its own mind alone. The infidels of the day ridiculed his personal appearance. He was of low stature and stoop-shouldered; his forehead bald and his nose crooked as though it had been broken. He was so delicate that much of the time in his missionary travels he was almost blind with headache. In Lucian and Jerome, enemy and friend, you will find the evidence that the great soul of the apostle was set

among thorns of the flesh. But God's roses bloom among thorns.

It is wonderful that the people received with so much affection a man so unprepossessing. And yet no man that has ever journeyed upon earth ever found in his fellows a deeper friendship. Paul himself says that, notwithstanding his infirmity, he was received "as though an angel from God." The explanation, after all, is easy. The heart and mind make up the man. A great cause acting in the soul illumines the face and sheds a halo around the body that transforms it into angelic outline. Thus Paul moved around transfigured by his grand charity and piety; and as, in a certain condition, Heaven's light on the horizon takes up the village on the shore and transforms it into palaces in the upper air, so there is a condition of virtue and love often in man that will make a homely face radiant, and make the life and memory of a Paul too vast and beautiful to be caught upon a page of history. In the holy atmosphere of missions Paul was transfigured.

Look far onward in Church history and behold Francis Xavier, "the apostle of the Indies." Let me ask you not to permit your feelings as Protestants to act as a prejudice against the claims of the

Catholic Xavier to your love and admiration. The proverb that no good could come out of Nazareth, once met with a wonderful rebuke. Out of a land so unpromising came a Christ. Out of the Roman Church, notwithstanding the dark stains upon its character, there have in all the old centuries shone forth at times rays of beautiful light, as when the sun gleams out from among the clouds. From that Church came Fenelon, Massillon, Guyon, names that would not by comparison disgrace the holiest ones of the human race. And particularly in this department of missions did the old Catholic Church reveal a spirit wonderfully like the spirit of the Saviour. All over this land, from the Gulf to the Canadas, have the holy fathers trodden when other hearts quailed before the dangers and the depressing solitudes of this once desolate world. The Indians of the Canadas differ to-day from the blood-thirsty, brutal Sioux, because, led by the Catholic priests, the Northern tribes, before you and I were born, learned to look at the crucifix and bow in prayer. Out of the old Catholic Church came Xavier. Rich in gold, but richer still in spirit, high by titles of rank, but higher still by that manhood which Christ confers, nothing offered him happiness but the wide search for souls. He was the Christopher, the

Christ bearer, of the sixteenth century. In that century no theologian found Christ: only the missionary knew the heart of Jesus. Entering a village in the Indies, he walked through the middle of the streets ringing a little bell, calling men, and women, and children around him; his dress was simplicity itself; his face benignant; his eloquence that of righteousness and love. When a ship's crew was attacked with disease he became "all things to all men;" as physician he prescribed for the sick; as a nurse he washed the clothes of the men; as a minister of religion he pointed the dying to the cross. He penetrated almost all the Eastern lands, and was drawing near the Chinese millions when death carried him from the field of battle, to the land of eternal peace. I can not forbear repeating here a second time before you the farewell hymn of Xavier when his friends would dissuade him from his noble conception:

Hush you! close your dismal story;
What to me are tempests wild?
Heroes on the way to glory
Heed not pastimes of a child,
For the souls of men I'm sailing,
Blow, ye winds, north, south, east, west,
Though the storm be round me wailing,
There 'll be peace within my breast.

The name of Judson may serve to illustrate the same spirit bursting forth from the Protestant world; but with this difference of scene, that at last the beauty and impressiveness of any one star is lost in the grandeur of a whole heaven bestudded in all its blue. Judson led in the mighty works of this century, a kind of morning star running before its great sunshine. For about forty years he toiled for his fellowmen, and repeated in the nineteenth century what Paul had done in the first, and Xavier in the sixteenth. It is all one story — love, labor, suffering, and heroic death. If you will study these three lives until your heart can see these three heroes going forth each day to their toil, you will have in your possession something that will keep ever before you the sublime attributes of man, and will make you feel that perhaps humanity was made in the image of God.

When profane history spreads out before you the bloody page of Alexander, and Cæsar, and Nero, and your heart feels faint and sick, turn away and look upon these missionary faces that have gone from earth to heaven, and your eyes will dim with tears of gratitude that God made man so noble in feelings and in destiny. Guizot and Hallam and all the philosophers of history tell us what good influ-

ences came from the knights-errant that wandered for a few generations over Europe. We are assured that they rode to and fro with helmet and sword and armor in the interest of equity. It is possible that they developed military prowess and some new conception of personal honor. But whenever the world's civilization shall desire to see the heroes that laid the deep foundations of our age and of the coming more golden time, it will have to pass by the glittering mail of knights and see the Pauls, and Marquettes, and Elliotts, and Duffs moving around wearing the sword of the spirit and the richly jeweled helmet of salvation.

And mark the excellence of these names above other names than these written in heraldry. Pronounce the beloved words that recall the philanthropists of the past, Wilberforce, Bright, Garrison, Sumner, all that long array of lofty ones, and yet the missionary spirit of Paul and Xavier outranks them all, for the reforms of Sumner and Wilberforce were but the border of the garment; not the whole realm of riches and hope and faith and piety, but only the civil liberty of mankind. Hence, when our slaves became free some of the great souls which for years had plead for that freedom sunk within their bosoms as though the

work of life had been done. One of these confessed that it remained only for him to die and find rest. But the missionary spirit begins afresh when the statesman casts his work down. It includes the philanthropy of Charles Sumner as the light of the sun includes the light of the moon, and the twilight of morn and eve. Sumner, and Howard, and Nightingale are satellites that revolve around that great blazing center of love in which the Paul and the Christ acted out their careers. Christianity included freedom and then rushed still on.

In reflecting, this morning, over the missionary spirit can we escape observing the fact that whether it was Paul rising up in the first century, or Xavier in the remoter time, or Judson in our era, the scene is the same? Between those three souls there is no discord; and for this reason: their spirits came from one fountain — Christ. The schools may furnish theologians and preachers and send them forth out of all harmony and able to throw the world into discord, but it is Christ alone who creates the missionary. All these illustrious children of the wilderness, these preachers under the trees, and among the wild men of the East and West, drew nothing from man, but all from God; and hence, come when and where they may, they are all one

picture within. By the principle of geometry, that things equal to the same thing are equal to each other, these widely separated heroes are alike because they are like to the same original of Nazareth. Theology fights the more the farther it is from Christ.

O, loftiest spirit of earth, the soul of a Paul, or a Xavier, or a Judson! What want there may seem of beauty comes from our inability to rise high enough in our feelings to see and measure this grandeur. It is said that men throw their offerings down at the feet of the gods because the human eye is unable to see and the human arm too short to enable the worshiper to place his garlands upon the forehead of Deity. With similar weakness and humility we all, of a mercenary and infidel age, being unable to see and reach the divine forehead of this missionary spirit, that loftiest shape of soul, can not do otherwise than come to-day and whisper our words of homage at her feet. The ancients saw in their sacred vales and woods three graces, and at times, in poetic moments, nine muses; but this single grace, the spirit of love, this wandering virtue of missions, surpasses all the old fabled ones of history. Setting forth from Bethlehem, this love of man for man has journeyed over all continents, and to-day seems to be only beginning the development

of her divine plan. Continents that lie in darkness shall see light, and the wilderness that has no beauty shall soon bloom like the rose. Here in the noise and dust of traffic and under the shadows of sin, you and I fail to see these divine features, but should it ever be our happiness to pass within heaven's gate, oh, how these earthly hearts that turned many to righteousness will, in that upper sky, shine as stars for ever and ever.

YOUTH:
ITS DUTIES AND PRIVILEGES.

SERMON XI.

YOUTH, ITS DUTIES AND PRIVILEGES.

Ecclesiastes, 12th chapter.

IF, as is commonly supposed, this chapter was written by Solomon, our boasting century must award him the honor of having penned a passage not to be surpassed for beauty and wisdom and pathos by any thing in modern literature. Upon the theme, "Youth, its Duties and Privileges," Solomon ought to have written well. If, as is often said, no eloquence can come from an empty heart, from Solomon's heart, full of final failure and bitterness, there should have come easily just such an eloquence of sadness and penitence as appears in this address to the young. The great king had wasted his gifted life. He had loosed the silver cords; had broken the pitcher at the fountain. The windows out of which he had once seen a beautiful world had become darkened. We may confess that Solomon must have written the chapter, for only out

of his full heart could such eloquence have poured. What a sublime multitude was in his mind when he called up before his imagination all the young men of his empire! But the multitude was sublime beyond the vision of the writer, for hundreds of years after Solomon and his throne had perished, those words were to pass from Hebrew to Greek words, from Greek to Latin, from Latin to German and English, and be read and loved by millions in continents then unknown. Strange things happen in the world of mind. When the poor, blind Homer was singing his songs in old villages three thousand years ago, his poverty-stricken heart could not have dreamed that in all the subsequent ages the greatest men of all nations would read his verses with inexpressible delight. Solomon may have written this chapter in his chamber, only for his own instruction and relief, just as a full heart will often weep in secret, but unawares Solomon addressed the whole world. The walls of his chamber were taken away and all the centuries saw the weeping thinker and the sad thought.

Let us leave now the old unhappy king and spend our half-hour beside that great stream of life called "youth." No science has yet told us when youth terminates. This must come from the fact

that there is no definite boundary to that beautiful state. It begins indeed at the cradle, but just where its precious period ends and where middle life begins no one has been able to announce. Perhaps God has mercifully hidden the dividing line that we may not weep as we pass over it, but may go onward with a light heart, not knowing that the light of the spirit is becoming mingled with shadow. Let us then accept of the indefiniteness of nature and declare youth to be a period reaching from the cradle out into the area of life, but without exact confines. As day fades into night, thus youth fades, and after a time the soul looks up and says, "Night has come." While these boundaries are indefinite, yet there are hundreds here to-day who know that they are living in this period declared as golden, not only by poets but by philosophers. They know it not only by the mere count of years, but by the buoyancy and hope of their hearts. As yet the world lies not back of them, but before them. Like children of a Christmas, they are happy not because the day has come, but because its light is about to dawn. The human heart is great only when it is capable of great inspiration. When those years are upon man in which the morrow is wreathed with splendor like the nimbus around the foreheads of

the old saints, then the mind and whole soul are passing through their period of greatest power. When the heart is so susceptible that all the winds of earth, even the softest whisper, waken music amid its strings, then the greatest days of this life are passing. They may not be the most powerful days in actual events. Events come slowly. But they are the most powerful days in all those qualities that produce events. The actual harvest is always far away from the sowing time. Indeed, the harvest comes toward the fall of the year. It stands close by the autumn leaf. But the days that made the harvest began far back in the March and April rains. So the noble events of life come, perhaps, in full or late manhood, but they are only the ripened fruit of a tree that put forth its leaves and blossoms long before, when the noble atmosphere of youth lay around the spirit. The young, looking at all the illustrious ones of the world, and marking that they are standing in middle life, feel that they can hope little from the present, as it still is too far away from great action. Fatal mistake! That middle life so full of honors is only the place where the stream of youth empties all its long-borne treasures. Middle life is the place where the torrent of the heart tumbles into the sea. Coleridge says,

"No one ever became a poet after he had passed his twenty-first year." The meaning of such words must be that such a beautiful fabric as verse can be woven only out of moments full of life's early enthusiasm and early colorings. Indeed, the most remarkable men of all history have achieved their greatness by the time the thirtieth year had come, for up to that period the idealism, the dreams, the vehemence of the mind, the inspiration of the soul, sweep along in all the majesty of a heavy wave or a rushing storm. As the Cumean sibyl raved when the spirit of prophecy was upon her; as the old prophets seemed half frenzied when their lips sang those stately strains of destiny, so the utterances and deeds of middle life are only the final language of that sibyl that raves in the bosom all through the inspired hours of life's morning.

There are many melancholy scenes on earth. The millions of poor in Ireland might well touch all souls with pity. All over the world there are strewn great calamities of mankind. A journey among men is much like passing through a forest after a tornado has just passed by, or like passing through Calabria on the morning after the earthquake had shaken it; but more painful than all these scenes is the spectacle of millions of youth daily

exhausting upon low pursuits, or childish pursuits, an enthusiasm and an inspiration of soul implanted by the Creator for the purpose of creating and decorating a world. Every young heart of man or woman carries within it a vitality that may make, and a genius that may beautify, a vast empire. As God implants in the young bird a power that makes it at last spread its wings and cast itself upon the soft air, so into the young bosom, which He loves more than He loves the sparrow, He has emptied an urn of enthusiasm, of hope, of sentiment, of love, of ambition, which are to become the wings of all subsequent flight. Trusting yourselves, my young friends, to these wings, the great air of the world will softly and sweetly bear you up. But to permit this holy vitality to exhaust itself in a saloon beneath the pavement, to compel the inspiration of a young heart to spend its divine resources upon a drunken song, or to study only the shape and colorings of a toilet, to turn away such a gifted spirit from the intoxication of learning, of art, of culture, of religion, and make it beat its bright wings only in the foul cages of vice, is the most painful of all the pictures seen in the drama of man — most painful because so vast and so influential for wretchedness.

The classic books which nearly all of you have

read (thanks to that public education which has given the world's literature to all the rising generation,) told you of a lake called "Avernus." "Avernus" means birdless. Located in the desolate crater of an extinct volcano, a poisonous air issuing from the infernal depths hung over the dark water, and stupefied the sense of the eagle or the nightingale that tried to pass from shore to shore. Suddenly the wing became powerless, and the eagle with his pride and the nightingale with his song fell into the river of death. Let us bless the classics that they have handed down to us such a figure of human life. There is a lake of pleasure, of folly, of sin, lying near the homes of the young. A deadly air hangs over it. The young, forgetful or ignorant of its fatal vapors, spread their wings upon its hither shore — those wings made in Heaven, and good enough for angels. But at last their flight is checked, and be the heart once proud like the eagle's, or sweet with song like the lark's, alike it falls into the dark flood.

Thus all ye young be assured that the wonderful activity within, and the rosy imagination of these days, are a power that should be busy constructing the future. A happy middle life does not spring up out of itself. The eloquence of Henry Clay did not come to him in 1830 or 1840, when he stood in the

height of power, but came in that rosy light of oratory that hung over his cradle in 1777 and in that longing of the soul that made the corn-fields of Virginia the audience of his recitations and soliloquies. Thus all greatness comes from permitting the inspiration of youth to pour itself along some sacred path. At twenty-five the trickling drops have become a stream; at thirty the streamlet has become a majestic river. The heart will never become as powerful again as it was when it was young and possessed the power to enlarge the future, and, like the sun, draw up sweet water from that outspread sea. The sadness of old age lies partly in its inability to paint any longer in brilliant colors. Unless old age finds itself full of the poetry and rapture stored up in life's morning, it becomes only a solemnity, a face turned downward. The blessedness of young life lies in its privilege of singing:

> There is a fount about to stream,
> There is a light about to beam,
> There is a warmth about to glow,
> There is a flower about to blow.

Let us now ask the question, How shall the young make the most of life? The most general answer and the most valuable one is, "By common sense and by will power." What keeps you from

throwing yourself into the lake, or into a fire, or from the roof of the house? This simple quality of man called common sense is the nearest and best guardian angel of each mortal. Others believe in other guardian angels. But inasmuch as God has given you all this will-power and this common sense it is almost an impertinence in us to demand additional guardian angels from the same heaven.

Some declare that religion will save the young, and that alone. But this reply is too superficial — for what will set religion before the mind in the proper light? What shall unfold its value? At the foundation of all safety lies, therefore, "common sense," that forbids you to hurl yourself into the sea or down the precipice. Into this God-made balance place the good and ill of earth and weigh them, and then hold fast to that which is good.

The young of the past have been deeply injured by a philosophy which informed them that they possessed no power, that they must seek some day a divine overshadowing that would in an instant change their natures and set them out upon the new career of saints. Under the influence of this blight our youth have assumed themselves to be powerless, and have drifted along in every folly and weakness, expecting the Deity to come and remake them at

some later day. The tens of millions of ruined youth in the world now show that God does not often come to a life that has neglected itself. God sent His angel of human will and human judgment before Him, and He loves to enter the heart, not that rejected His messengers, but that received them.

Hence, the first law of reform or of protection is that we dare not think the thought or do the deed of a fool. Castelar says that Alexandre Dumas failed of greatness because "he was willing to tell a lie in his books." Literature reposes upon truth. So a good life reposes upon common sense, and can not stand upon a basis of folly. Why should God send other angels if we despise the first?

Second law of success: This intelligence must busy itself chiefly in keeping always before the mind "high ideals." Life must not be projected upon a scale of simple amusement, or of riches, or ease, but upon a plan of high spiritual nature. This thought has already been involved in what we have said about the beautiful outlook of youth. Setting forth in his career, each human being living in our land and century perceives a light on the far off horizon. Before us in early years this light is white and charming. To compel the will to look always toward it, and to persuade the heart always

to love it, is the highest duty of early life. This ideal will be found composed of two things — an integrity toward man and God, and then some idol of this life. Follow it, and you will find religion as to God, and a glorious life pursuit as to earth. Byron held to only one-half the vision. But he made a gigantic world out of that half. His ideal never moved from its place. The Scotch reviewers could not extinguish or eclipse the star. Wherever the unhappy lord went, his harp was in his hand, and all the world of beauty, all the seas, all the mountains, all the joys and griefs of mankind, came to him to be blessed with the immortality of song. Before Franklin stood the dream of wisdom and knowledge. Before all who have ever reached a valuable distinction there has stood a future full of a light that has never once gone out. With these two lofty heights before the eye, the height of morals and of personal development, life can not be a failure, end where it may, in middle years or in old age.

But these thoughts bring us now to one of the most powerful enemies of the young. There is a foe on the field that is vanquishing many a gifted brain. Of the power of sin and folly I have already spoken. Let us confess, now, the hunger for riches

to be one of the most injurious appetites that gnaws at the modern heart-strings. It is all the more to be dreaded because it comes backed by the philosophy of the whole century. The philosophy of Plato and the Bible turned men toward spirituality, and forth came the thinkers, the poets, the philosophers, and the apostles. The philosophy of Bacon came and turned man toward *things*. Railways, and ships, and carriages, and houses, and farms, and stores, and all the million of *things* poured out of the new shape of reason like sparks from a conflagration. Whereas once the world was full of beauty or chivalry, it is now overflowing with things. Money represents all these things. It will buy any thing from a diamond to a railway. Hence, money stands for almost all the world material, and dust made and perishable. In other times it might have stood for religion, or knowledge, or culture. But our philosophy being material, money follows the genius of the times and stands for things and not for soul. Thus before the millions of the young shines a star unworthy to guide the spirit, a yellow star lurid as Mars, sickly as the Dog star in August. The Astor who has just died, the great millionaires about to go from earth, have written over their own pursuits, "All is

vanity." If only a few men in a generation were struggling for gold, the world could bear the strain, but when the public philosophy is material, and all the sweet infants are born into the passion for money as they are born into liberty and language, the outlook seems draped with clouds.

Such being the weakness of the age, the youth in whose bosom there remains some of the spiritual power accustomed to shed over nature something of a divine light must battle against the sin of his day, and set up again some ideal holier than money. He must open the hearts of all the great dead that lie dreaming in the silent past, and find how feeble in all of them was the love of money, but how powerful the love of the true, the beautiful, and the good. He must lift the shroud from the forehead of all, from the Sappho of old Greece and the Terence and Virgil of Rome to the last great soul that has left earth and there see that for none of them did riches weave a single wreath. Humility of property and of soul inserted all the flowers in their chaplets.

It is the custom now of those who have lived for money alone to be urged in their last days to make large bequests to schools, colleges, libraries; and some of them, less perfectly ruined by the

passion than others, do surrender at last the riches that can not follow them. This dying act we call charity. And such it is. But such a final administration of the effects of the dead only shows that our little money, before we come to the grave, should take these spiritual paths confessed to be so noble. The wills of the rich are thus only penitential tears falling over a misspent life, telling us not how gold should be employed after one has gotten a million and stands by a grave, but how it should be administered when one's cheek is still in bloom and the star of the soul shines out in its first magnitude.

The young man tells me that his ideal of life is high, but he has not the means of reaching it. Well, wealth is not often the means. The highest ideals are best reached from the humble home.

Almost the whole column of great names stands upon the bed-rock of humble property. Our statesmen, our thinkers, our writers, our judges on the bench, our orators, have all been born poor. In all the history of man the pursuit of gold has warred against the development of self. The rock of poverty seems hard and cold, but within it is jasper.

The pursuit and the possession of money clip the wings of the soul. All through literature, all through

art, the plain cottage, the unpretending home, stands for the triumph of earth. The poets, the painters, the orators — all these sensitive souls — know where human happiness has been found in all the long experience of man. They read the book of fate for us and tell us its true meaning. And yet these inspired brains, when they have wished to show us the beauty of life, have never led us up to the door of a palace, but always to some place where the rose blooms by a quiet spot, and where the song of the birds and the light of the sun meet in the same interlacing leaves, the waves of light and the waves of sound flowing together toward the heart. The magnificent kings have wished often for the peace of humble life. The court of Charles X., sickened by splendor, repaired to the country and dressed as shepherds and toiled for a time, that they might touch life, not in its cares, but in its sweetness. In the novel of Auerbach it was not Irma in the palace that was so blessed, but Irma in her mountain home that gave the writer such a picture of spiritual and physical beauty. The care of large property injures the soul by turning it away from those mental and moral paths along which grow the sweetest and most imperishable flowers. This is no new view. It is not the telling of a secret. The world knows that the

highest happiness is found in the constant pursuit of an ideal, and that the chase for riches is only an intoxication like the fascination of the goblet of wine or the cup of flattery. We all drink these cups, not because they are valuable, but because we are weak.

What is called "moderate property" or even "humble means," is the best condition of success. An educated book-keeper has within his reach a triumph which the owner of the "bank" or the "business" may never reach. Emerson says, "Give me health and a June day, and I will make the pomp of kings ridiculous." It is necessary only to throw down the god Money from his pedestal, to trample that senseless idol under foot, and to set up all the higher ideals — a neat home, vines of one's own planting, a few books full of the inspiration of genius, a few friends worthy of being loved and able to love in return, a hundred pleasures that bring no penitence, a devotion to the right that will never swerve, a simple religion empty of all bigotry, full of faith and love, and to such a philosophy earth will give up what joy it knows. With these sublime images around one, the heart will rest in the center like the sun in the midst of his attendants, with all the bright planets around, radiant in light and sweet in harmony.

This, my young friends, is not my philosophy; it is a theory of life drawn from all the world's experience. Not a generation has lived upon earth which has not, after having tried all the paths of action, bowed at last to the philosophy that it is the steady light of noble ideas that makes life pass in blessedness and in peace. Home, industry, education, friends, honor, and religion, are the ministering angels that alone are worthy to wait upon the human soul. In their arms they shall bear you up.

To the young this philosophy comes with peculiar power. There are many persons in this house to whom all this glowing theory of life is in vain. They are far along in years. It is too late for them to think of placing before their eyes a star that shall guide them and never grow dim. They must compose their hands for death, crossing them upon the breast. But to you, young men and young women, this divine philosophy, wrung from the tears of former times, comes like the song of the morning lark. It greets you as you rise from your couch. This morning hymn, sung by the world, is for you. To us older ones come only evening hymns, the *misereres* of memory and sorrow. Before you the world lies to-day greater in its power and beauty than ever before any young souls, since it rose from the sea of

chaos. Remember, then, that you must grasp this life while the inspiration of youth is pouring like a torrent through your heart. You will not dare exhaust upon sinful or trifling pursuits a nerve-power that is, indeed, the first vibration of the strings that should make immortal music. Use not the harp of God at a dance of Bacchanals. Trample under foot the new idol called Riches, and remember that out of humble life the mightiest souls have come, and on the threshold of a cottage the holiest sunlight has always fallen.

A GREAT GOD.

SERMON XII.

A GREAT GOD.

"For the Lord is a great God."—*Psalms* 95:3.

WONDERFUL as the unfolding of the natural world is the unfolding of the world spiritual. The natural world is the school house in which we may, if we will, learn the higher truths of the moral universe. But as children often sit in the school room all through their early years unwilling to learn the lessons, longing for play or idleness, so we older ones pass our time in the great academy of nature with our idle eyes wandering far away from the valuable page. Let us try to-day to study one lesson, if for only an hour; perhaps, as we all grow older, we may pass from page to page, and find all the book richer and more valuable the more we hang over its varied contents.

The first idea in this morning's study is that as the floral world is developed out of itself, as the

animal world is evolved from the less to the greater, so ideas grow, and from humility pass on to greatness, from cloud roll out into light. As the moon at night often remains partly concealed, and leaves the traveler or the poet or the lover uncertain as to where the loved satellite may be, but as presently the great silver ball moves out into the clear sky, so the ideas of man are only half visible at first, and pass out into the cloudless azure only after the eyes of earth have watched long and faithfully. There is a perfect harmony between the world of plants and animals and the world of ideas. Once there was a wild dog moving stealthily through the old forests back of the Aryans and the Greeks. It was the color of the ground, that more powerful enemies could not see it readily, and that in its own ambush it might be invisible. It did not bark. It did not recognize in man its coming friend, nor did man six thousand years ago see in that creature of the forest the brute that was to come nearest of all the wordless animals to being a companion. Thousands of years have passed, and now a hundred or more species exist of this once wild beast of night and of prey. Once the plain wild rose bloomed in the woodland. But the toil and the science and affection of man stood by this

"sweet briar" for hundreds of years, and now all the civilized world is filled with roses of every size and every color and every perfume. Thus the material kingdom widens under the influence of intelligence and industry, passing from the small to the great as the spark of fire kindles into a conflagration.

Just such is the growth of ideas. Man reaches a physical maturity at the age of thirty or forty, but there are ideas which will grow steadily for thousands of years without having reached any perfect stature, and without having found a resting place. There are other notions that are born complete. When the first human intellect declared that two and two are four, it exhausted the formula. The idea was finished. But when man for the first time pronounced the word "mother," or "liberty," or "friend," or "God," he began the construction of an object that should turn into a world, and from a world into a universe. The word "mother" did not mean much in the earliest tribes, for they would often put to death parents too old to work. In Abraham's day the word "sister" did not imply much beyond the meaning of woman or slave. And in Lot's day the home-names, now so full of sacredness, had little

significance. Father and daughter were sounds that scarcely rose one shade above the terms male and female; and the word man differed little from the word brute. But along came the mighty stages of development pouring around these ideas the light of new thought and the warmth of new love. As the foliage of each Summer, and the riches of the elements fall upon the earth each year and make its soil deeper and richer, so the successive generations cast their thoughts and affections and actions down upon the world of ideas, and these ideas grow more and more luxuriant under this long lasting care. Behold the Greeks adding to the import of the word "art"! Under their care how the word "beauty" expands! And there Antigone came along, born out of poetry, and by her pure and infinite affection put to shame that estimate of sister seen in the history of Abraham and Lot. Look into the nineteenth century and mark how it has enlarged these terms. Ask Cowper the meaning of that word "mother" that runs along through so many languages. He gazes at the portrait and says, with tears,

"O that those lips had language."

The word "mother" comes down through thirty languages and through thirty centuries, but each

age pours more of love and reflection into the beautiful urn. Our word "grace" once in Sanscrit represented the prancing horses that drew the chariot of the sun, but the deeper spirituality of subsequent eras has made the word mean the easy, yielding friendship of a God. The sun's chariot passed away to make room for Christ.

Among the ideas of earth that are most restless and most progressive and most infinite, let us confess the idea of God. As the first geographers made our earth so contemptible that a man or a turtle was an adequate foundation for its mass, so the first theologians saw God as only a hero or a sleeping, dreaming Oriental king. Compared with the nations around, the God of the Hebrews marked a wonderful progress, and looking into the darkness around him David truly sang his song, "For our Lord is a great God;" but even his picture was far below the reality, and the world hastened to move on. Christianity came and gave the idea of the Heavenly Father a new and wonderful impulse. The actions once attributed to Deity were repudiated by Christ, and out of that New Testament era there came a new Creator, a new Father. An idea marched rapidly forward.

You perceive now, my friends, the method of my

argument, and it need not be pursued further. It is time to apply it to the religious faith and practice of our day. The lesson that comes to us from the argument is simply this: We must take the words of the past, "Our Lord is a great God," and empty into them the light and sentiment of the present, or else there will be no psalm for our hearts. One thing that chills modern worship may be found in the attempt of modern hearts to worship the God pictured in the far-off yesterday. If you would love your child you will not dare ask old India to define the word child for you. If you are to fight for liberty you will not dare ask an old Persian king to define the political idea in your behalf. No heroism, no sacrifice, will spring up in your bosom out of his thought. But if your own day tells you that liberty implies the freedom of all, even women, and implies the freedom of the mind from ignorance, and of the soul from degrading vice, then you can go to the battle-field with divine calmness and power. It can not be otherwise in the act of worship. It will be perfectly vain for you to attempt laying flowers of affection upon the altar of the Hebrew God, or Calvin's God, or the Papal God.

One of the first preludes of worship must be the *gloria*, "Our God is a great God," for unless the

soul feels that it is approaching a being of infinite beauty, a being without spot, the worship will all turn into mockery, notwithstanding the upturned face and bended knee. As a fact, no age will ever be able to find an exact image of the Creator. But the world is cumulative, and will, as a general rule, give in its later estimate more truth in religion than it found in all former meditations. Hence, you who feel ever the impulse of worship, the sweetness of it, the solemnity of it in the spirit, must be careful to kneel at the altar of a great God, that you may yourself be transfigured on the holy mount. It often comes to pass that the best worship comes into the soul when it is out under the heavens at night, or in the forests in Summer, because there the infinity of the sky, that host of stars whose light has come to us only by falling a million years, or the sweet solitude of the forest where every leaf seems written upon by the finger of the Omnipresent One, fills the human spirit with such a consciousness of a great God that the worshiper bursts forth in tears. Coleridge, in the valley of Chamouni, betrays the secret of all deep worship:

> Awake,
> Voice of sweet song! Awake, my heart, awake!
> Green vales and icy cliffs, all join my hymn,

> Thou first and chief sole sovereign of the vale,
> Oh, struggling with the darkness all the night
> And visited all night by troops of stars.

Thus that immense phenomenon of nature became a voice eloquent; proclaiming the greatness of that Being before whom the human soul is wont to kneel. Whatever thus exalts the Creator exalts Him not only as a power, but as a love, and hence, in the sublimity of that mountain there came not to the religious mind only the feeling of nearness to One who made the world, but in the magnificent light, and in the whispering of the pines there came full persuasion of Heaven's tenderness toward man. We can not love a contemptible human being. All the beloved ones of history stand forth in some alluring atmosphere of genius, or truth, or beauty, and without much admixture of meanness or sin. Never can we carry our worship to a defective God. He must rise up before us in such a holy and alluring form that the heart will ask all the world to join it in its anthem. Actions, ideas, persons, creeds that once were the symbols of religion, and marred the divine idea by the blighting power of association, must be carefully removed from the temple that the worshiper may bow before something that he may deeply love.

Men come to the minister of religion and ask him how he explains this and that dark page of history, this or that dogma. Oftentimes the best reply would be, "Turn aside from all that record and go ask *this* age, *these* scenes, the wants of to-day, the longings of your soul to give you back the lost or injured God." Much that is called theology is only the place where men have trampled down the ground in their own mad conflicts. In India devout heathen move in procession through the streets saying "ram," "ram," and the spectators bow because those who thus run are priests of religion; but the Infinite God is not there. Those fakirs that cut their bodies with knives are all theologians. Thus the religious history of the world marks not the place where God has been, but only the places where human hope and human madness, human darkness and light, met and struggled and bled. When the poor heretic was burned at Geneva, when the covenanter girl was tied to a stake where the tide would slowly rise over her, when the witches were burned, when infants were damned—God was not present; religion was not there. Those places were spots where contending men met just as old Carthage and old Alexandria were places where opposing vandals came together, and where,

between sword and spear, warm life became death, and brilliant cities a desolation.

When looking back you behold these harrowing scenes reaching along over the centuries, remember God was not there. For our God is a great God. The sufferings of the martyr, the tears of the exile, the children lost because unbaptized, the men condemned from all eternity, the *auto-da-fes* of earth, are not ideas to which ever God drew near; but rather paths where the feet of man trampled when he was just emerging from the night of perfect barbarism, when women loved the amphitheater of death, and when heroes drank from the skull of an enemy. Before the modern soul can become a true worshiper it is often necessary to approach God, not upon the side of old history, but upon the side of new nature. Give us Jesus Christ and the great spectacle of the universe, that Being and these heavens, and we can find a God, to worship whom will ever be a joy. The moral splendor of Christ and the parallel infiniteness of creation give the mind a Deity so great that all the universe becomes his temple, and all winds, and thunders, and bird-songs, combine in a hymn of adoration.

Religion has been wrought out in its details from two different points of observation. A strange geo-

grapher, from some star, landing upon earth in the northern regions, would go back saying he had found a world of ice; landing at the equator, he would declare he had found a planet covered with flowers. Thus religion has been described from two stand-points, but chiefly from the stand-point of man. The survey of it from the modern idea of God has yet scarcely been made. The world's heart has not toiled under the sublime watchword of the psalm, "Our Lord is a great God," and from that lofty statement made up all the essential parts of its worship; but rather the human family has said, "Man is a great man," and has drawn its creeds and ceremonies out of the human bosom. When you perceive candles burning by the altar and a pageant of bowing priests, whose robes are bespangled with gold, you may chant the words, "Great is man," but you must reserve for some other hour the higher chant, "Our God is a great God." You must keep back these higher words until either the vastness of the universe, or the great wave of human life, or the awful mystery of death, has led you away from the wax tapers, and brought you into the presence of the Infinite. The great sanctuaries of man, from the mighty St. Peter's of Rome to the great Abbey of Westminster, were for hundreds of years places where

the little children of religion played their sacred games around the altar of a God for whom they had no measurement. Could the real Deity have come down from the invisible home and poured Himself into those vain hearts, all the toys and ceremonies of the hour would have been overwhelmed by the glory of the Heavenly Father. When John Rogers or Servetus was suffering in the flames, could the great God of Heaven have revealed Himself, could that wretched throng around the kindling fire have had their souls enlarged until the true idea of God could have found entrance, that company would have plucked the victim from the stake and have begged to be forgiven for an error so weak and for a crime so cruel. They would have wept for days over such an injustice to a brother, and for engaging in such a satire upon the Almighty.

Much of the indefiniteness of the Bible comes from the fact that God cares nothing for the minutiæ of human worship. There is nothing definite in the Bible except the picture of Christ leading man to virtue, because the greatness of God forbids that He should care for aught beside. To suppose the Creator of the universe to have a choice between immersion and sprinkling, to suppose the Almighty to be partial to a posture in prayer, to suppose Him to

have a choice between a government of bishops and a government by all the clergy, to inquire whether the Infinite One loves better the robes of the priest or the plain dress of the citizen — this is to degrade the name of God and to drag worship down to the level of a court etiquette. The Bible is the most indefinite of books in the delineation of forms, and the most definite of all books in pointing out the reward and punishment of virtue and vice. Its baptism is obscure; its righteousness is most evident. Only a most precise and trifling argument can find Presbyterianism or the Episcopacy in the Bible; but a broad, visible, noble argument points out the Saviour of mankind. It is only a microscopic analysis that can find in that book the world's "Confessions of Faith," but the human soul can not read a page in the book without hearing a whole sky-full of angels saying, "Blessed are the pure in heart." The manner of baptism, the time, the manner of the Trinity, the last analysis of Christ, the presbyter or the bishop, all these and a thousand more ideas lie in the Bible in utter neglect because the God whom we worship has no preference here. He cares not what man finds in the holy writings if only he finds virtue. I should as soon ask of God whether I should plant my flower

bed with pinks or with violets as to inquire of Him whether my baptism must be in much water or by a few drops.

Taking your stand close by the greatness of God, not only does the smallness of much of man's creed appear in a strong light, but also much of its falseness falls with a thrilling pain upon the heart. Who is this God that any age or any individual should ever have debated the destiny of a dying infant? What is there in the Infinite One, what is there in that Being whose throne is in the center of the universe, in that Being whose sunlight is only a feeble emblem of His love, that should make the mother hasten to have her dying child baptized, lest it might fall from her bosom into a world of torments? What has God done that his name should suffer such long and painful degradation? God has done nothing to merit such a creed. But religion has been wrought out, not from the being of God, but from the being of man. Man has come to us in all ages, and offered us a Deity fashioned after the nearest king or despot, and millions of children, old and young, have gone to bed at night whispering their prayers to a Deity not so kind or sweet or just as the mother who has just bidden them "good night!" In those days it used to be a

dreadful fear that perhaps we might that night go from the kingdom of our mother to the kingdom of God. Our mother was always more beautiful than God!

It is now complained by public men, men full of fear for our country overrun by all forms of vice, that religion is doing little to purify the atmosphere that hangs like a cloud of doom over our nation, How far the Church at large merits such words of half sorrow and half reproach, no one can tell; but we feel fully ready to say that the more the altars of human worship draw their light and inspiration from the character of God alone, and linger less around the ideas that come only from man, the more rapid will be the ascent of the nation toward a higher life. Many an altar now exists to which the worshipers repair, not that they may find holiness, but may keep alive some ideas held by their fathers. A large part of church life is only a rivalry about systems instead of a humble worship of God. Oh, had we all the wings of piety that could carry us, and the breadth of mind for such a flight, and should we fly to the throne, and instead of deducing religion up from man bring it down from the realm of light, we should return to earth with a piety that would dispel the fears of the statesmen and

make radiant the future of the great nation and the poor mortal heart. How can an altar reform earth when it is itself a part of earth? How can it lift us to God when its God is already upon the ground and is himself partly clay? Altars enough there are along the paths. And when the patriot counts them he may well wonder that good citizens do not come marching forth in holy multitudes out of such a cloud of incense. But it is not numbers of altars that most save men. All depends upon the idea to which the holy stones are heaped up. It will be ages upon ages before an altar to Presbyterianism, or Methodism, or to Romanism, or to Independency, or to Eloquence, or to Genius will bless the world like an altar to the Living God. The running to and fro of men full of anxiety lest their Church may not be visible enough, the acrimonious warfare of sects over their childish properties, will never enter the world's great life and form a part of its goodness and piety. In presence of such a Church our nation can march right along to destruction, just as Rome sunk in vice while the temples were full and a thousand priests were intoning psalms at the altar. The altar was inscribed to man, not to God. The sanctuary of the Great God, with Christ as the High Priest,

is the only one from which the present century can come forth with a soul whiter than it carried into it. Our age must part company with the baleful associations of the old theology. A theology that unconsciously degraded the God it loved; it must define religion to be, not a belief, but a piety; it must look up to God and from the Father, Son, and Spirit draw down a religion with the greatness of God written all over it. It must hear that voice that created all things by the word of its power repeating the deep laws of his temple — a righteousness that loves the true and good; a faith that guides; a penitence that washes white; a love that embraces the world; a hope that adds eternity to time, paradise to earth, and a Christ the leader and inspiration in the midst of these doctrines, and then upborne by ideas so vast and so true the age may soon cease to weep that its temples do not bring it a higher civilization. We dare not make God a party to our petty warfare of creeds. We dare not employ Him in our inquisitions or in our debates over transubstantiation or legitimacy. He must be seen only as the Great God sitting upon the throne of justice, so lofty, so infinite, that a soul passing into His temple will feel that nothing but a pure heart can fit it for so sublime a worship.

THE EMPIRE OF LAW.

SERMON XIII.

THE EMPIRE OF LAW.

"Oh, how love I Thy law! It is my meditation all the day." —*Psalms* 119:97.

THERE is not much that is accidental in the life of an individual or a nation. One of the facts that the modern times are establishing is that the whole universe is under the reign of law. From the most immense and most remote sun to the smallest atom of dust, law is forming and retaining and guiding all things at all moments. Nothing is independent. Things and events once referred directly to God are now referred to the laws of God as to the invariable agent of the Almighty. This great inference affects not in the least the idea or providence of God, for here as among human actors the principle applies that what one does through an agent he does through himself.

Some declare that the world seems less sacred and charming to them since science has brought in

such an array of second causes between them and the marvels of nature, filling up with physical or mental forces a place once full of the Heavenly Father. But this disappointment is destined to be only temporary, for as soon as the mind can become fully acquainted with the conception of a universe of law, it will find the old world of accident or miracle a poor, small thing compared with a universe all moving under law. When God was supposed to be in the thunder or in the quick lightning, or in the pestilence, or in the conflagration of cities, or in the earthquake, he was taken from all other events and places so as to be employed in one flash of lightning or in one material crash. The philosophy of law exalts God into the infinite and occupies Him at once with all the worlds and all their contents. He no longer comes and goes, one day alarming by a calamity and then leaving society to feel that He has gone away and may not return for years, but He is always in us, and with us, and around us, not intermittent, but everlasting. This fact is not an argument for atheism, but rather for pantheism, for in such a world God is omnipresent indeed.

We dwellers in such a methodical planet may therefore rest assured that the outcome of our lives

will depend upon what rules we break and what rules we regard. If we are law-abiding children, then shall we find success; if we are law-breaking, then shall we suffer defeat A human soul is sent into being just as is sent a tree, or flower, or a planet, or an empire. Its laws are around it, the ministering angels to bear it up.

History is full of the ruins of empires and cities. Could you sit down by each ruin and find the causes that brought it, only one report would come from Palmyra, or Thebes, or Babylon, or Athens, or Alexandria: "We violated the laws of life and are dead." Within their once-living hands and hearts the laws of industry, of morals, of social life, of political well-being, were broken and death came. If from any cause the law of gravitation should be broken for an hour by our earth, it would fall away never to run her beautiful circle again. The sun's fiery ocean would, in a brief period, receive the falling, unfortunate star. But the law of gravitation is only one upon the great statute book. The old nations have all fallen because they regarded not the mighty decalogue written upon their rocks, their fields, their palaces, their homes, their hearts. The story of Moses is perpetual and universal. Encamp where men may, at Sinai or in America, there is

always a Moses coming with shining face carrying in his arms the laws of God. The soul that sinneth it shall die. But it shall be well with the righteous.

From this thought, that man is set down in the midst of laws, let us pass to a second reflection, that "law-abiding" is a term that blinds many a soul to the real significance of life. The word "law" has become so associated with only the prohibitions of God and nature that many a soul thinks itself a saint when it simply has not *broken* the few prohibitory statutes of its Maker. "Law-abiding" is a term that points out only the harmless soul. It shows us one who has never been wicked, not one who has been or shall be great. The Ten Commandments keep the soul from the gallows or from contempt, but they make no great character. As well might the philosopher Franklin, or the poet Bryant claim that their success had come from being obedient to the laws of New York as for a soul to point to the Ten Commandments as the basis of the halo of a saint. When the young man told Christ he "had kept all these from his youth up," Christ informed him that he lacked one thing yet—he lacked not the simple abstaining from sin, but an ardent espousal of some virtue. The decalogue saves weak souls from sin and vice, but it makes no

heroes. The martyrs, the inventors, the missionaries from Paul to Xavier, the mighty men that have shaken the world and then made it come to their tombs to weep, have all woven their imperishable wreaths from the laws of industry and love, and faith and hope which they loved and fulfilled, and not from the criminal laws which they did not violate. If not to kill, not to steal, not to worship an idol, made great men, the road thitherward would be easy. Not here amid these criminal statutes can you and I find, therefore, the path to the best existence. We must obey them easily and always, and then seek new worlds to conquer.

Perhaps the religious world wronged all us children when we were young by leaving us to feel that God had passed for us only laws against vice. We know not where to lay the blame. But this we know, that God hovered around all these laws of sin, and when we stood away from them we seemed to stand away from any commandments which came from the Creator. All other truths of the world seemed only the ideas of philosophy or science. The holy voice of Heaven did not seem to sound through them. We thought that the laws of economy came from Poor Richard's almanac; that the freedom of slaves was a thought coming

from Wilberforce; that the study and love of nature had been recommended by the poets. But now science has joined hands with religion, and has helped us find a God whose laws are underlying all things and pervading all things, as light shines all through the morning dew-drops. It is not probable that science intended so to magnify the office of the Creator, and often it has not consciously done so, but many are the religious hearts to-day which bless science for making the universe so large and for filling it every where with the presence of the Heavenly Father. The scientific minds have so pursued the theme of "law," "law," and with such wonderful success, that now we feel that there is no chamber of the soul, no hour of existence, into which the divine wish does not come. As the blood circulates in all the atoms of the body, making roses on the face of youth and painting the little fingers of the infant, and then filling the hero's heart, so the laws of the Infinite follow us, not in pitiless wrath, but in the tenderest love. They follow us when we eat, making the table a joy; they follow us in happy hours, opening the heart to friendship; they are present in all the tears of this pilgrimage; when we go to sleep we commit ourselves to the commandments of the universe, and

they wake us when the measured hours have passed. All around us is law, like a sea rolling around an island. The admiration of the psalmist, who cried out, "How I love Thy law!" should undergo great enlargement in a century that has found how vast and sublime is the empire of this beneficent legislation.

If, now, these reflections are founded upon fact, then we must mark what are some of these great laws that so environ us, obedience to which will render us such good citizens. Take a single example — the law of the human will. The will is located in the soul, to be the impulse and governor of action. The law of the carrier-pigeon is an instinct. The law of migrating birds is also an instinct, like the infant's hunger for food. Instinct will do but one thing, and in but one way. The carrier-dove will fly only to one city. Infinitely above such a sense is the human will, for it sees before it a thousand paths and a thousand actions. It stands among events like a child in the flowery fields, at liberty to cull any of the beautiful, sweetly-perfumed blossoms on either hand. As God moves about in the middle of His universe, so man stands in the center of his realm, the disposer of events, the weaver of destiny. His is not the single motion

of the messenger-bird in only one straight line to only one village, but it is His to manage a myriad of details, and arrange them into all forms of utility and beauty. Hence, the largest faculty of man is his will, that power that hurls the heart and mind along an orbit as magnificent as the path of a planet. This is the one of the Ten Commandments that no one can disregard and live. When a young man draws near the confines of life and can not look at its noble possibilities and say, "I will," when he stands without resolve in such a crisis, all the mountain trembles with the thunders of wrath; and hot lightnings carve the rocks because at the mountain's base there is taking place such a breaking of law. He is a harmless citizen who does not kill, and does not steal, and does not break a Sabbath day. But to be harmless, is to be only an infant. He is the lofty mortal who can give his soul to a great mode of action and can say, "I will," in life's morning and forever keep the vow. Some European philosopher said, a few years ago, that "the universe is an enormous will rushing into life." Beautiful statement of the fact! God was full of power and beauty. His infinite soul filled all space. But He desired to see embodied in outer form the divine conception, and as the

fabled goddess saw her figure in the lake, so the true Deity made a universe that held the image of Himself. Having done this He created intelligent beings who could come and see the picture. Thus all that we behold, from the deep heavens to the colored violet, is the will of God rushing into life, as the dream of Angelo arose in the arches of St. Peter's, or the thought of Raphael burst forth in the Madonna. That very spiritual, intelligent potency which gave us the creation was bestowed upon man, and though not infinite in power, yet it does wonderful things in this seventy-year circle of life. It wakes up the sleeping spirit. The tendency of man is to repose. In southern climates the will grows weak and all the days pass as though sleep were the best form of immortality. But northward the will rises and awakes all the dreaming chambers of the soul. It shouts its orders, and all the sleeping troops in the soul rise as though the long drum-beat were sounded. Few are the men who are standing in the front by accident. The faces of the impressive ones were all marked faces. The forehead and the cheek were carved where the will struggled for mastery over the passions of the flesh. People are amazed when they see the pictures of the old worthies; amazed at the rude

features, the furrowed forehead, the knotted chin and eyebrows. But the pictures we possess are gentler than reality, for art has a tenderness that makes it tone down and soften the rugged subject. Art forgets that the beauty of graceful lines is not half so impressive as the beauty of that marked, that homely face, where the God-like energy of the soul fought the great battle of politics, liberty, or science, or religion. When we remember what mighty works they have done and at what a cost of purpose, we desire no longer to have the old heroes come to us in the likeness of girlhood, but in the deep lines of power and solemnity.

Write down, my young friends, as a law of God worthy of your love, this potency of the human will. Guided by the right, the right of public and private life, and the right in religion, it will take these years and shape them as the potter shapes clay into an Etruscan vase. But, this law neglected, all these years sink into a sleep that knows no waking.

While seeking for some of these laws not gathered up in the first decalogue, may we not include faith and hope? When Christ told the multitude that if one had faith as a mustard seed he could move a mountain, He announced a law of the spirit. A positive belief in the progress of man

and the presence of God will be to the heart like a breeze to the sailing ship. Faith and hope are a great motive power of the world. Along with a powerful will they cast the heart forward. But without faith and hope the will has no path for its mighty action. A large ship must have a sea to sail in. How shameful to launch an ocean-palace in only a stagnant pond! So the will-power seen in man begs for the ocean of faith and hope. Such machinery, such masts, such canvas, demand that the sea be deep and the voyage long. Life has always been compared to the sea. Accepting the figure, let us declare that faith and hope are the winds that blow over it, not only carrying our vessels to all the ports of the mighty nations, but ruffling the waters, making them sweet and beautiful. Faith comes into Christianity from the general outside experience of mankind. It did not originate in Christianity any more than eloquence originated in politics, or color on the painter's canvas. Eloquence journeyed into the political life because great themes lay there to be developed, and colors lingered with Titian and Paul Veronese because they held in their brains the subject and in their souls the taste that could weave into matchless beauty the gaudy pencils of light. Thus, faith entered Christianity because the scene

before the Christ was sublime. The lofty purity of the soul, the infinite love of man for man and for God, the vista of endless life, were allurements which faith could not resist, and into Christianity she moved like a happy queen ascending for the first time the steps of her throne. The moment any thing — country, or pursuit, or love, or virtue, or heaven — can lift up large ideas before the soul for faith and hope to seize upon, then is one's destiny secure, for the mind becomes full of inspiration and the spirit of music. This is that faith which Christ beheld up-rooting trees and moving mountains from place to place.

There is one ill of life not often found in the catalogue of human calamity. It is not poverty. It is not humble parentage. It is not failure to find office or troops of friends. It is that languor which comes from the absence of an energetic will rushing forward through the gates of faith and hope. There is a kind of palm-tree in the very top of which, amid the leaves opening like a rosebud, there is an inner bud still. It is sweet to the taste. But travelers say that when one has plucked out this central bud, the tree at once withers and dies. It seems to be the tree's heart. Man seems to repeat in the spirit-world this phenomenon of the world of

matter; for whatever plucks the faith out of the opening leaves of life makes the stately soul all wither. Happy day for earth when such a being as Jesus Christ came to stand in the center of religious belief to transform faith into a passion. Out of that new and infinite outlook came the new purity of the human heart; came the tenderness that abolished the Coliseum; came the heroism that made martyrs; came the spiritual power that gave us new literature and new arts; came the new high and solemn music; came the equality of man that gave us liberty; came the pure worship that leads to Heaven. Where Christ has gone and has been deeply loved, languor, that withering of the soul, has been delayed or averted. The missionary has sailed out upon every sea; the Elliotts and Marquettes have traversed the pine forests and the prairies; the Henry Martyns have prayed in Persia; every where the heart of man has moved out toward his fellow, because this faith and hope have beaten like a glorious midsummer storm upon the barren heart, and have transformed it into an Eden. Faith alone touches the strings of the soul and makes music.

Such are some of the great laws that surround us in this world. Add them to the decalogue of

Moses and feel that if you break one of these commandments, of the will, or of faith, or of hope, in that hour the clouds of sorrow are gathering upon your sky. There are criminal laws which having been respected, you will escape the doom of a felon, but you will not by them be made useful, or noble, or happy. There are physical laws which, if observed, will save you from weakness and sickness and premature death, but they will give you only the success of an organism, of a machine. Then come the spiritual laws, above all as God is above dust, and into these man casting himself, he becomes a living soul, with the days too short for his high duties and the years too few for his happiness. It is here, in the midst of these laws, God dwells. Certainly God is every where. When the prohibitions of the moral law are read to us, God is indeed there.

But God is not like a human throne set only for the punishment of offenders. "Thou shalt not" is not the favorite language of the Blessed One, but rather, "Thou mayst." His laws of denial are few, of permission, infinite. Pass ye all from the God on Mount Sinai to the God on Mount Sion. Not by the lightnings, but by the sunshine of the latter, read the new tables of divine enactment. Read not only

the whole story of Christ, that old, old story, till you hold it all in your heart, but read on until you behold the Infinite One in the human will laden with energy, in the faith that fills the future with ideals, in the philanthropy that enables one heart to love a world, in even the soul's perceptive power that drinks in the world's music and perfumed zephyrs. "Oh, how I love thy law!" Yes! love it in its written and unwritten forms! Love it when found by the theologians, and, when unseen by them, it was found by philosophy and by science!

The evil of a destructive skepticism must lie chiefly in that arrest of spiritual power which it must bring. There is a rationalism which, while it is busy destroying some ideas, is pouring tenfold love upon other thoughts. It moves away from a desert that it may build up a home in a paradise. This is a glorious rationalism. But there is an ultra logic which, instead of moving away from the desert, declares all other places to be also a sandy waste, and it sits down to perpetual stoicism or perpetual sorrow. Such a skepticism is a withdrawal of the supplies of life. For many of the springs of life can not be discovered and established by logic. The Nile may be followed and its sources found, but there are streams in the soul to whose fountain-

heads our science can not come. It must be assumed that they come from the alpha of life, a personal God. The critical inquiry that denies this, has repealed in this overthrow of faith a law that has been the intense life of man.

It already is becoming evident that the skepticism of our century is sending to the closet, or else to a life of indifference, many gifted brains which in a warmer age would have battled for man on the field of right or of religion. By as much as we grow in the number of our philosophers we seem to decline in the number of our heroes. Crusades that should rescue the tomb of Christ were possible in the eleventh century, because then enthusiasm swept through the human heart like a gulf stream. The nations were ruled by passion and romance. But crusades of heroes to redeem either the Church or the government, the tomb of Christ or the tomb of Washington, would seem impossible in the nineteenth century. It may be that a wide skepticism is already withdrawing great spiritual forces which once impelled and allured the armies of politics and religion.

If, however, unbelief has not become a national evil, if it is beyond our power to enter the soul of a nation and discover what is checking the current

of its once powerful life, we can at least go to the individual and tell him that unless he loves and obeys these spiritual laws that lie all around him like a spider's web, his heart will become empty, and day will change to night. Read upon tables of rock the laws of industry, of will, of faith, of love, of justice, and cry out with the ancient worshiper, "Oh, how I love Thy law!" He that erases one of these commandments makes of your soul a deserted house. It is full of joy and language and music no more. I speak not simply in the name of religion. All the hours and years of this life ask you to confess the supreme power of the will, of faith, of hope. You can not despise the mighty forces without becoming "as a house without inhabitant." Often have we seen within the boundaries of a single heart an image of that "deserted village" of the poet.

> Sweet smiling village! loveliest of the lawn,
> Thy sports are fled, and all thy charms withdrawn,
> Amidst thy bowers the tyrant's hand is seen
> And desolation saddens all the green.

THE INFLUENCE OF ATHEISM UPON MORALS.

SERMON XIV.

THE INFLUENCE OF ATHEISM UPON MORALS.

"Lord, thou hast been our dwelling-place in all generations." —*Psalms* 90:1.

LET us inquire, this morning, into the probable influence of atheism upon morals. Although there has always existed among men individuals who have avowed their non-belief in any Creator, yet the present is perhaps, beyond the custom of the world, full of the atheistic spirit. More than is customary has our generation studied the material causes of things. It has, in a peculiar manner, inquired into the development of animal and vegetable life, and in this long study has come upon causes not formerly seen or even dreamed of in the old philosophy. In former times the word God was called upon to do an immense service. When a glutton died of apoplexy, or a drunkard of a sudden spasm of the heart, the verdict was "Death from

visitation of God." The word God was used to atone for indolence of inquiry or poverty of thought. Also superstition loaded down the sacred idea and kept the Deity before the world as the performer of all sorts of high and low tragedy and comedy. The modern study into natural causes has affected not a little the relation of a God to an event, and hence has perhaps given to the present a little more than its share of the materialistic spirit. I need not pause to argue the question whether absolute atheism is possible. I do not believe that the mind can ever reach a perfect assurance that there is no God. But there is a practical, or rather influential, atheism possible, and not only possible, but in our day such a non-belief seems passing beyond its former limited proportions. In view of the approximative atheism we now witness, it seems timely we should all ask ourselves and each other what would be the effect upon morals of a widespread disbelief? To inquire into the logical relation between atheism and morals, is a task worthy of the hour.

The inquiry is difficult. Had there ever been a century in the past from which the idea of a God had been excluded, then should we possess some data of undoubted worth. Then our atheistic friends could not complain that their form of

thought had never enjoyed the advantage of an experiment. We are aware of the falseness of the logic which infers the inferiority of woman from her actual history, because, never having been free, always having been the victim of the superior brute force, she stands to-day in the situation of a case that has never been tried, where for six thousand years the witnesses of one side and the lawyers of one side only have addressed the court. Had woman been permitted a full and free experiment of six thousand years, we should be competent to-day to pass judgment upon her relative power of mind and spirit. So with atheism. We are aware of the difficulty under which it labors. All the nations have been in the hands of the theists. The God-idea has possessed the laws, the literatures, the arts, the home-life, the school, and the Church. In this case our argument can only be made up of probabilities, and can not expand into a demonstration. Only an *ex parte* statement has been heard.

1. It should weigh somewhat against the claims of atheism that the belief in God has always hastened to take possession of the human heart. The ideas of God and of no God stood upon an equal footing when the human race set forth upon its career. There were no churchmen standing by

to prejudice primitive man in favor of that form of thought called religion. According to the theory of man's origin accepted by the scientists, this race was as free to keep away from the belief in a Creator as to approach it. Hence, it should weigh something against the materialists that man every where, in continent or island, fell into the arms of a divine philosophy. It amounts almost to a presumption against atheism that the human family has granted it no nation, and no hundred years even, in which to conduct its experiment of unbelief. How came the statement to be so *ex parte?*

2. Our second reflection is that the world's morals have as a fact descended from a belief in a God. However far back we look, the development of conscience and virtue is only a form assumed by the development of the idea of a Supreme Ruler. The human race has always placed in the heavens a standard of right and wrong, and has gazed upward as if to read there the path of duty. In the oldest records of Homer, or Moses, or Zoroaster, of Chaldea, Egypt, or India, there is to be seen a Being, above human, standing as the supreme right of the universe. The Vedas of the old Hindoos all overflow with this consciousness of a God. One of these sacred books says: "The great Lord of these worlds

sees as if He were near. A man may think he walks by stealth, but the gods know it. If a man stands, or walks, or hides; if two persons whisper together, God Varuna knows it. He is there as a third. He who should flee far beyond the sky, even he would not escape Varuna the king." Such is the religious spirit of a literature which two thousand years before Christ lay in ten large books spread out before an almost countless multitude of souls. While Abraham and his followers were looking up to Jehovah by faith, influenced by a celestial city that had foundations, while Jacob, in a dream, was beholding a ladder reaching from earth to sky with divine messengers upon the steps, the Aryans were moving across India with their hearts as full as Jacob's soul was with the presence of God and His angels.

While the Indian millions and Chaldean millions were thus drawing their morals from the assumption of a God, the Greeks and Latins were preparing to take up elsewhere the same belief, and to express it both in song and in philosophy. Homer's poem opens with the picture of a holy prophet walking upon the seashore praying for a justice above human justice. The Achilles, whom no battle-field could alarm, feared the wrath of the king of Olympus.

In the old poems of the Greeks there is no one impulse more powerful in the bosom of all those dramatic characters than the impulse of religion. In some of its details religion was false; in many details childish; but there it stood the great power that bent the knee of Achilles and Agamemnon and the stormy Ajaxes. Even the beautiful Antigone, that ideal sister, confessed that she feared not man, for there were laws of sisterly affection above the laws of man, laws issuing from eternity. In the Greek drama, the chorus marched in between acts to chant the solemn strains of the deities. All through the classic literature there runs a religious spirit that shows how the public and private morality of that long period was associated as cause and effect with the ideas of religion. Some of the most powerful passages in the unrivaled oratory of that period occur when the Cicero or the Julius Cæsar appeal for justice to the "immortal gods." An old Greek says: "There is no swiftness by which one may escape God; no darkness that may conceal from Him." From Virgil and Horace come maxims of religion which one might suppose stolen from the Psalms of David or the Wisdom of Solomon. Epictetus said: "Relation to Cæsar gave a sense of freedom and security void of all fear; shall

not, then, the idea of having God for our Maker and Father deliver us from all terror or grief?" The same pagan says: "Above all pleasures place the consciousness that you are obeying God."

It would require days, even weeks, to quote from antiquity all it has uttered about God. One would as well attempt to convey to you an idea of the tropics by bringing you a leaf or flower or an imprisoned song-bird, as by a word or a phrase attempt to show you how the idea of God filled the atmosphere of that old but half-forgotten world. You err greatly, my friends, if in pondering over the relation of morality and religion you follow only that branch of religion that has come down from Bethlehem. An argument based upon Christianity alone would indeed be powerful; but why look upon a class of men when all the human family marches before you in one solid army? Why gaze at an island only when before you lies a magnificent world? The simple fact is that as far back as we can look we find wicked men fearing the shadow of God, good men loving it; we see by every stream the altar of worship, and thither repairing not only children and vestals arrayed in white, but the wisest and greatest also repairing thither in the garments of philosophy.

The stream of public morals having thus poured down through all history from the mountains of religion, from what source will atheism draw morals when it shall have abolished these fountains? It is necessary that a river like the Nile should have an adequate source. Such a stream overflowing all Egypt, changing itself into a sea once each year, must possess some where a reason for that uprising of waters. No rains fall in Egypt. Under skies that are never clouded that mysterious stream begins to rise, and day and night for weeks its waters creep over the banks and widen out over the wide plains. Science for three thousand years sought the solution of the mystery, and at last found it in the wonderful rainstorms that beat at the fountains of the river four thousand miles away.

The stream of public morals has thus come down from far-off influences. It has overflowed the vales of human life. This sacred water has flowed to the altar where the bride has stood, where the child has received baptism, where the dirge has been chanted for the dead. It has given spiritual life to the statesman, images to the poet, eloquence to the orator, joy to the honorable, fear to the wicked. With the fear of God removed, whence shall come any more this great overflow of a stream so grand

and life-giving? What mountains can atheism rear that can equal these mountains of religion's holy feelings and holy faith? What rain-storm can it cause to beat that shall equal that great storm of divine justice and love that falls from the windows of Heaven upon the springs of piety? Whence is atheism to draw its mighty Nile of virtue and peace?

It has two replies ready so far as we know. It may, indeed, possess others, but they have escaped my attention or memory. 1. The respect and love of mankind are motive enough and reward enough of a virtuous life. This is the plea of the French atheists. They confessed humanity to be God enough. While we confess the dignity of such an affection, and that it has inspired many a heart to noble action, yet it would seem unable to produce a morals beautiful enough, or universal enough, or powerful enough, or cheerful enough, to meet the wants of society. In the day of its trial it did not meet the expectation of its advocates. The Frenchmen who cast themselves upon this worship of man did not rise up as under the spell of a new and superior religion, but they sunk as though their hearts had been emptied of a once powerful inspiration. The days of the French revolution and the

half century following showed that the worship of humanity could not lift the spirit upward as it was lifted by the harp of Isaiah, or by the prayers of Epictetus, or by the holy cross of our Lord. The songs of the Red Republicans were a poor spiritual food compared with Zion's songs, which broke the hearts of Judah's daughters in a strange land, or which echoed in the "misereres" and "glorias" of the seventeenth century.

The worship of humanity became a worship of food, and drink, and pleasure; and handed over to a merciful oblivion those who turned away from Heaven's God to fling their offerings upon man's altar. The votaries of this new morals never soared up to eloquence. They failed to become Pauls, ready to die for virtue; they failed to imitate Savonarola as missionaries against vice; they found no French eloquence on their lips such as had made kings penitent in the days of Bossuet and Massillon. Their religion languished as a piety and expanded only as a despair. Coming to a lofty intellect like August Comte, it only turned into a philosophic obscurity and sadness that became readily a poetry but never a salvation.

Furthermore, what was that humanity which these philosophers so loved that their sentiment was

dignified as a religion? What was that human race whose memory was all the immortality the good man might desire? Alas, for their argument, this stream of life which so touched that school had been made beautiful in the temple of religion. Out of that sanctuary had come Seneca with his high philosophy, Aurelius with his virtue, St. Louis with his prayers, Beatrice with her beauty of soul, Dante with his poetry, Angelo with his subjects, Massillon with his eloquence, the orators with their rights of man, the Church with its charity. If the worship of man be indeed so noble it is unfortunate for atheism that religion had to come first and create such a charming humanity. And yet such is the dilemma. Into that web of life so loved by the followers of Comte, religion, Pagan and Christian, has interwoven its many beautiful threads. The human race, so beautiful, had made its charming toilet in the temple of the gods.

The second reply of atheism is this: As a fact it has produced great characters. It points to a few minds great in talent, and learning, and usefulness, and spiritual peace. I confess the splendor of those names, which have become representatives of a world without a God. In learning, some of them have stood among the highest; in purity of life they

have equaled the saints. There are human pictures in the gallery of atheism that long detain the spectator with their lines of beauty. But before these grand portraits we make these two reflections. First, the atheism was not complete. In all the days and years of those men God stood before them as a possibility. He passed by at times as a shadow or as a radiance. He came not, indeed, as drawn by the Calvinistic or Roman articles, but came as the eternal Alpha and Omega, trailing His garments in the sunset, or whispering upon the colossal harp of nature, whose frame is made of worlds and whose strings are the rays of streaming light; came not as a fear; not as a vengeance; but as the universal Mind from which all souls have fallen as pollen from the anthers of flowers. There are lofty minds so gifted with sensibility and so full of skepticism's tears that in their highly-wrought spirits an almost invisible outline of a Creator wakes up more of the music of religion than other souls less divine ever draw from their whole Trinity or from a whole Pantheon.

Second reflection: There exists no individual in the whole world who stands for only his own belief. Each child of the nineteenth century is the product of the eighteenth and seventeenth centuries, and of

all former times. No soul can live an absolute life. Each person in this assembly is three or four thousand years old. Not only were the features of the modern face wrought out in France, Germany, and England, but there also the soul lay and took its shape of sentiment. Our souls are vases into which the past poured not its ashes, but its faith. Hence, what atheists there are in the present are not standing up in a moral or a mental greatness all their own, but in a consciousness and conscience gradually fashioned in days where the mothers bowed in prayer, and where all the music and eloquence of Christianity molded the sentiments. The customs and maxims of life surrounding the atheist of to-day are not customs and maxims of his own, but of the theism in minds and hearts that have come down through the atmosphere of a piety and have been colored in its religious hues. The atheists of to-day are, therefore, not the results of the worship of humanity, but they are still the results of a history that has every where been full of the Supreme Being. A man may reject the creed of yesterday, but he can not reject its influence any more than he can command his forehead to become low or his intellect to go back to the stolidity of the times of King Alfred. Hence, the

atheists of to-day stand half-clad at least in the beautiful robes of an old religion. As it required thousands of years for religion to build up the shape of human character we now witness on earth, and as the shapings of society come after long processes of education, and long successions of life and death, so atheism will not dare come into this passing century, and, picking out a lofty philosopher here and there, say, "These are my proofs of the adequacy of unbelief." It would be necessary for one or two centuries to come and go, all empty of God — centuries in which no daughter or wife looked toward Heaven, in which no philosopher or statesman saw in eternity any idea of right, or in immortality any reward — before the advocates of a society without God can point us to a man or woman of their own make; can point us to the unalloyed results of their system.

It would be begging the question to declare that those results springing forth from the worship of only humanity would be pitiable. I do not know what kind of men and women would stand upon earth in a hundred years after religion had been withdrawn. But we may scarcely doubt that earth would retreat in its departments of morals, and beauty, and power. Man is fashioned by ideals. As

all the painters and sculptors have shaped their skill, have drawn their inspiration from ideal faces more beautiful than life, so the moral quality in the soul has shaped itself before the mirror in which lay the infinite love and purity. As the army of Moses marched toward the pillar of cloud and fire, so the army of all men has marched toward that ideal of holiness which we call God, filling all space with its radiance. Of all visions that have cheered and directed and inspired man, the vision of God and immortality has been the chief. Atheism would be an awful destruction of ideals. To make man look downward instead of up, to look backward instead of into endless life, to ask the heart to exchange God's temple for the forum, to ask woman to look away from the Infinite purity and find her virtue only in the laws of the state, this would be such a destruction of ideals as a soul fashioned like the human soul could not bear, we fear, without sinking like that morning star, Lucifer, from the light of heaven down to hell's rayless gloom. The soul is not shaped by the actual but by the ideal.

Permit me to add one reflection more. If the difficulty of atheism lies partly in its never having been granted a time and field of experiment, so theism labors under a similar embarrassment. It,

too, has had no time and no place. At no time has there been before the human race a truthful image of the Creator. If you point to Christ, the reply is that the world has failed to see the Christ. It immediately clothed Him in its own half-vile raiment, and mingled Heaven's beauty with earth's deformity. We can truly say that theism has never enjoyed a career of light and liberty. It has had to pass along, with its divine wings plucked of their plumes by the ignorance of men, and with millstones of diabolism fastened to those feet that were made for floors of sapphire. All along, the Christian's God has been degraded and made to build the fires of torture where martyrs have died; made to forge the fetters of slaves; made to consign men to hell for ever from "mere good pleasure," and made to call those His saints who have been unworthy of the association of even good men. For eighteen hundred years our God has lain like a Prometheus chained to the Church's rock, the vulture of human ignorance at His vitals, and the links of lame humanity festering in His flesh.

> There Prometheus lay, chained to the cold rocks of Caucasus;
> The vulture at his vitals, and the links
> Of the lame Lemnian festering in his flesh.

When we mark in what distorted shape the ages

past accepted of its God, how they transformed Him into the likeness, not simply of man, but even of wicked man, we can not but wonder that the human race has drawn from His worship so much of spiritual power and beauty. But if thus seen through a dark glass, the idea of God has so molded all thought and character, what will atheism ever bring to place alongside that conception of the Creator that is now trying to burst into the world through the windows of a holier temple? If the altars of religion helped man even when those altars asked man to go forth to cruel war and cruel persecution, what may not the human race expect from them when the only beings that shall bow before them shall be brothers, saints, penitents, and the only angels above that new mercy-seat shall be the seraph of love and the cherub of light?

THE TRUE LIBERALISM.

SERMON XV.

THE TRUE LIBERALISM.

"Forbid him not, for he that is not against us is for us."—*Luke* 9:50.

IN times when the words "liberal" and "liberal Christians," and "broad" and "broadness" are flying from all the open mouths of the present, from some accompanied by derision, from others with delight, it seems our duty to pause long enough to define the terms. To-day I shall discuss before you the real meaning of the word "Liberality."

How full the air is of this word! This idea of liberalism assumes many different names, and, entering the bodies of a hundred different words, is flying around like birds in the air or moving like troops upon the battle-field. There are two parties in the world beneath this flight of words. One party loves all these sounds that express in one way or another what they call "advanced ideas," while

the other party cordially hates the same group of expressions and feels that they are the watchwords of an advancing Satan. To them "liberality" is the highway to atheism.

This "liberalism" has been in the world so long that there must be something real and tangible about it. In a most unexpected moment it came from the lips of Christ when some of his impetuous disciples wished him to check some men who seemed to be acting as Christians without having received a direct commission. To the amazement of the disciples, we doubt not, Christ commanded that they be let alone, for they were doing something for the kingdom. They had a desire to serve the Master, and that desire was too valuable to be checked by any rebuke.

No doubt "liberalism" is as old as human thought. From what we see in the history of Athens and Rome there must always have been men in each period of the world who were busy protesting against certain old forms of custom and idea. Indeed, this is not a matter of conjecture. From old India, full of despotism, there arose poets who sung of liberty. In Greece, full of the polytheistic idea, there arose minds that declared the Divine Unity, and for a more spiritual worship.

One of the Greek sages did not desire to be called a citizen of Athens, but of the world. He did not love the law of caste, of exclusiveness, popular among the Athenians.

Each age having thus revealed a shape of liberality, it must be that "liberalism" possesses a spirit that the student may find and analyze. It is an old and a large body; it would be wonderful if it should have no soul. We can not believe such a statement. There must be a soul in it, and we imagine that soul is a noble one.

The spirit of liberalism must consist of the *wish* to gather up the most general ideas of politics, ethics, or religion. The word "broadness" must result from this quality. There are in all systems two sets of ideas, a local and temporary group doing duty in their day, and a universal and lasting group doing duty for ever. In our government the ideas of currency or internal improvements or tariff are less permanent than the ideas of liberty and equality. "Broadness" must be a mental tendency to estimate and love these less changing ideas. Such must have been the inspiration of the public orator who declared slavery to be sectional and freedom national. When, on the opposite, Dr. Palmer and Jefferson Davis rallied to the support of

slavery, they illustrated narrowness by giving their great intellects to a perishable fact.

Any one looking at Christianity will perceive that it moves forward amid two sets of facts; that the facts of one class are changeable as the clouds upon the sky; that the facts of the other class are permanent as the deep blue back of the clouds. It is known to all the lovers of nature that the clouds never repeat their forms in the West. Never twice does the setting sun give the admiring world the same picture.

Thus, in Christianity, no two eras arrange alike the religious details. The revivals, the service, the sermons, the prayers, the hymns, the music, the ceremonies, change like the toilet of the worshipers. More than this, doctrines change, and out of a hundred ideas that enter an age, only a tenth will come forth meaning what they meant, or retaining the love they enjoyed when they passed into the gates of the epoch. Ideas rush into a century much like the "charge of the six hundred." Beautiful is their equipment, bright their armor, nodding and white their plumes, but after the thunder of battle has passed by, how few are the warrior truths that remain! The field is covered with the dead.

Now, it must be that true liberalism is an effort

to find the unchanging truths, the heroes that never die, and to enlist under their banner. It is no pleasing outlook of life if, after one has given his days of work and sorrow to doctrines, these doctrines are all to perish, to be put aside as men throw away old raiment. Why should one toil and fight and even die for the pope, or for the conservation of slavery, or for the divine right of kings, if just after us are to come generations who will build up a wide freedom without slave or pope or king upon the ruins of one's life and thought? All the disappointments of the past, all the labors that have come to naught, all the broken hearts sleeping in forgotten graves, combine to warn you against idolizing the transient of thought and to implore you to give your soul to the fewer but grander truths that are perpetual.

Why labor for the meat that perisheth?

To many the word "liberality" carries within it all the terrors of "infidelity" or "atheism." The last lesson the multitude will learn is that the most of their beloved ideas are transient. The venerable father supposes the tune he sings without time or melody is to be sung forever. The multitude refuse to realize that any thing valuable will come after them. As a little child takes up its new hoop or

new top as though the game and pleasure were to be for eternity, so the majority of the human race press the customs of to-day to their bosoms as though millions of years hence they should thus stand, like Dante's two lovers transformed into eternal ice when their lips met. Any one coming to this multitude with any hint that their ideas will nearly all perish, will fall like Autumn leaves, comes always with all the hideousness of an infidel. While one part of humanity is made up of childish prejudice, the other part will always seem to be infidel.

Of course, there is a line where liberalism fades away into unbelief. But all thinking is perilous. The search for evidence is dangerous, for it builds up a love of proof which at last religion may fail to gratify. Liberalism may seek for the unchanging until amid the enigmas of the world, it shall cry out: "All is vanity," and confess no faith. But while the peril of the liberal spirit is great, the peril of the narrow spirit is vastly greater. For each soul marred or ruined by too much breadth, one can point to myriads rendered frightful by their assumption that the little ideas in their hands were the eternal wish of God. The bloody record of the past drew nearly all its crimson from multitudes who

would not look beyond their feet, but who thought the little doctrines they held were the everlasting laws of nature, and that the bloody psalm they sang was the sublime chant of eternity. While, then, the world embarks upon the career of liberality with some risk, the peril can never equal that which lay before the human family when it set forth thousands of years ago upon a career of narrowness. After the perils of belief, through which man has come, he has little to fear from the occasional evils of a higher rationalism. There will never be atheism enough in the world to cause a return of the sorrows once brought by credulity.

But, secondly, liberalism is not impelled by simply the love of the most true, but also by the love of the most useful. Its spirit is not simply philosophic, but also practical. All philosophy is humane. Not only are there sets of ideas that exist forever, but there are ideas that are constantly useful. All the glory of religion has come into the world by a few gates. The beautiful characters seen in the temple of religion were made by a few great agencies of the spiritual kingdom. Daniel left us no record of much else than a life of prayer. Enoch simply walked with God. Abraham looked up to Heaven. All that redeems the names of David and

Solomon was their penitence. The richness of their temple service counts for naught. Isaiah comes to us sacred in the simple light of piety. The glory of St. John lies in his near friendship with Christ. The fame of Aurelius as a religious being grows up out of his piety. The Saint Louis became exalted, not by being a Catholic, but by his unrivaled spirituality. Bossuet enjoys an immortality that comes not from the book he wrote against the Protestants, but from the plain truths of righteousness which he thundered forth in presence of kings. In his own day the people worshiped him because of his argument against the Protestant world, but the mistaken people and their adulation died along with the book, and then a permanent gratitude began to come up from the world over the perpetual ideas that ran through that old eloquence. Pascal was not assisted any by the accidental in his religion, but only by the few ideas that he found like a few grains of wheat in a great tomb of mummies. His girdle of thorns, his fastings, his hatred of so-called pleasure, his solemnities, all count nothing in the subsequent eras, but the golden ideas which he washed patiently from a shore of dirt and sand declare to-day the splendor of his soul. Thus all the mighty virtues of yesterday

come down to us from only a few gates, and liberalism, perceiving this, refuses to give its heart to any other ideas than those out of which the highest virtue, the immortal goodness of man, has come. Why, when all the long pathway of man is strewn with the wrecks of little, frail ideas, and adorned with monuments of great truths alone, should the children of to-day forget this impressive scene and worship again at altars which will soon become deserted of man and God? Look, for example, at Sir Thomas More. From the blemish found in his narrow Romanism, from the effect of his pamphlets against Luther and Tyndale, from the consent he gave to persecution, his name has been beautifully rescued by the single conception of integrity that lay in his bosom like an image of the Almighty. When Henry VIII. attempted to frighten him into signing a wicked law, he replied, "Terrors are for children, not for me!" Thus righteousness is seen to be an immortal law of human life. A true "liberalism," therefore, is only a human mind out in pursuit of that which has brought to the human family the most of good, and withdrawing the heart's love from all that is less worthy, it concentrates its affection where the worship of to-day will not be the contempt of to-morrow.

As liberalism is the seeker of the wider truth and the more permanent usefulness, so its opposite is the dissipation of the soul's forces over what is not of long life nor of value while it lives. The greatest usefulness comes from the concentration of love upon objects the most noble. The moment a man finds time or the disposition to love some small rite or ceremony, that moment his heart has divided up its current. Instead of flowing into the sea majestically like the Amazon, its love spreads out like the delta of the Nile into a hundred channels, through no one of which can an ocean ship pass. Any great truth sailing up toward such a heart must anchor on the outside.

Having now viewed theoretic liberality and having found it to be a philosophy and a utility, let us note now some of its theoretic duties. All relations involve duties. A citizen, a father, a friend, a painter, a poet, must confess duties that spring up from the peculiar qualities that give him the special name. Thus liberalism, unless it be only a shadow, must confess its own peculiar duties. Let us attempt to find some of these. (1.) It must tolerate all the many shades of Christian belief. It must seek to remove them, but must still love those who hold them. If, as this proud system claims, it seeks and

respects great general facts, it is bound to confess that the unchanging, immortal truth is difficult of attainment. and that a heart that should hate the narrow would be driven to misanthropy, and hate all mankind. One of the general truths which that philosophy must early bind up in its sacred bundle must be that love toward all men is the highest duty. This is an imperishable generality.

A second reason for this tolerance, and even affection, may be found in the fact that while the accidental ideas are living their brief life; while they are fluttering like ephemeral insects in a sunbeam that is to be at once the morning and evening light of their life, many who hold them are being led along to immortality, not by the ephemeral ideas, but by the very ideas of liberalism living beneath. Though the candle and the censer, and even the pope, of the Romanist, are false and worthless tenets and will pass away, yet in the bosoms of millions who hold these tenets there is flowing along the very river of truth, which the philosophers love as imperishable. There is no process by which all the human family may be transformed into philosophers. All are on the march toward that destiny, and this should give the wise men joy enough for the day. The majority are broad, though their theory be narrow.

While devotion to the transient is an injury, a drawing of the heart away from the great, yet in our age the narrowness is larger in theory than in life, for with the exception of here and there an individual, Christians are holding to the small ideas with only a gentle grasp, and are daily becoming more and more heirs of a full emancipation. If you will select two churches of this city; if you will choose from the hundreds of sanctuaries two seemingly so far apart as the Second Presbyterian and the Grace Episcopal Churches, and will, by a careful analysis, examine the souls that worship at those two shrines, you will find no marked qualities that distinguish between the two throngs. Coming from the same avenues and from the same conditions of life, the faith, and hope, and character, of the two groups are the same. Both trees will let fall the same fruit in the autumn of the grave. This resemblance comes to pass from the fact that only an ignorant age can be the perfect slave of minor ideas, and that in our century these two representative congregations are children of only general truths, and are carrying along with them a diversity that is becoming external, getting ready, like the chrysalis of the butterfly, to fall away and go back to dust, handing over the inmate to wings. Around those two meeting-houses an immense Chris-

tianity stands, enlarging the organ tones within by the responses of its deeper voice. The diversity of the two temples is neutralized by the unity of the surrounding century.

When a philosophic liberalism shall gather up the phenomena of church life as carefully as it seeks the general principles of religion, it will find much of its own breadth every where; will find itself able to join in the service of Episcopalian or Presbyterian without any other feeling than that of gratitude to God that all over earth His children have an altar for their hour of deep worship and meditation. The Unitarian who can not at times worship with the orthodox because of the errors in the book of the latter, has degraded his liberalism into a narrowness, for its mission being to find and love the general and lasting in thought, it is compelled to mark and love the general and lasting in the human soul. The truly broad churchman can worship in all temples, for as musical tones can be heard further than unpleasing sounds, so the divine parts of the service only will reach his spirit, his soul being too far upward to be reached by the notes that are discordant.

Having alluded now to the philosophy and the duties of liberalism, let us ask something about its associations in history. They have been both good

and bad. The theory is pure, but as nothing can pass through the hands of humanity without becoming soiled, so this mode of thought has often found its injurious extreme. Of all theories of government, that of a republic is the truest, but in the hands of actual men democracy has often ground the people with a severity equal to that of a despotism. An unjust tax sanctioned by a ballot-box is as hard to be borne as a similar tax levied by a king. Thus all good theories are made corrupt by passing through defective souls. Into such a world come all the ideals of the intellect and heart, and become stained like the marbles carried from God's hills, or the studio of the sculptor into the smoky cities of man. Thus liberalism has often rushed madly forward into the recklessness of a "free religion," or of an unbelief that discards all spiritual ideas. But the evil in its history has not been as great as the good. One may safely claim that the large part of the world's blessings have come from those minds that have hastened to separate the great from the small. Out of an entangled worship Socrates tried to deduce the unity and greatness of God. Paul became immortal by his effort to make the word Jew give place to the word human. Dante and Milton revolted against

kings, that they might espouse the broader cause of mankind. All the orators have built up their fame on the basis of only the broad and everlasting ideas of earth. Out of the transient no eloquence has ever been born. Liberalism has always been the coming of God, so far as God has ever come to His children. Paul, Luther, Wesley are places where the ceremonial gave place to the spiritual and the eternal. Permit me now to mention one name from which I have deduced what little of this broad philosophy it may be my happiness to possess. All of you are aware that there are many persons who look with horror upon all those who dare raise the banner of a broader Christianity. Mistaking their early associations for wisdom, and standing afar from mankind and near only to self, they carry a heart full of bitterness toward the disciples of general rather than of local and special ideas. It ought to be a matter of interest with these to know the fountain whence comes the true Christian liberalism which is rising within our century, and which is destined to blow like a sweet south wind over the centuries to come. But let us pronounce the name of the one mighty intellect which, more than all others, has sown in the Church the seeds of this harvest, of poisonous plants as some say, but

of golden grain indeed destined to be the food of the future! Let us pronounce the name and then ask those whose bosoms are full of alarm to call him "infidel," or "destroyer!" The name! The name! Ah! here it is—Jesus Christ of Bethlehem! There is the fountain whence roll the transparent waters of this broad philosophy. Far beyond all beings who have ever lived Christ was the broadest. His ideas are all imperishable. He cast out the temporary that had come down from Moses; He made the old iron-bound Sabbath die in the field where the sweet wheat was ripening; He saw the human soul in Lazarus, in Magdalen, in little children; He rebuked the disciples when they desired to draw the sword of their sect; He uttered few of the ideas that enter into the modern differences between denominations; He preached a discourse, every word of which falls not upon Judea, but upon the whole earth; a sermon under which all men have written the word "forever." There have been broad minds in all times. In our day men love to repeat the names of illustrious intellects, and praise them for "advanced thought." But much of this modern "broad thought" is only a denial or a silence. While the heart beats in man with its infinite longings, he can never be

styled "broad" who studies science and omits the soul. He is a partial, a half soul, who does nothing but debate over our dust. Christ is the true "liberalist," because He did not take refuge in silence or doubt, but boldly uttered His creed, and in such terms that it suits alike those of all times and continents.

The true Christian liberalism is, then, only the gradual coming of a time that changes not, of a beautiful that does not fade, of a good that turns not into a sorrow. The old Hebrew ritual became a burden. Its material objects became tiresome as soon as man grew larger within. As the philosophers love at last the pleasures of truth more than the pleasures of food and drink, so when the world reached development, it flung away the washings of hands and the killing of sacrifices, and worshiped the invisible. It took refuge in the spiritual Christ. Then the Roman age came with its higher externals, but again the world moved on in the great Reformation of the sixteenth century. And onward it will still move. The liberalism of you and me may be defective. Beyond doubt it is. It may possess too little piety and too little power to grasp all the facts. But coming generations will do God's will more perfectly and sweetly, and fling us aside as

we throw down the follies of our fathers, and will find the fullness of the stature of Christ, as far as our most extravagant dream. He who stood at the gates of our era nineteen hundred years ago and turned mankind toward a spiritual religion, contains within His infinite heart other blessings beyond those the nations have yet gathered, for in the kingdom of grace, as in the kingdom of nature, spring and harvest come in an endless succession.

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